

Small arms production and transfers in Southeast Asia



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**SMALL ARMS PRODUCTION AND TRANSFERS
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

David Capie

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Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence are a series of monograph publications that arise out of the work of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University. Previous Canberra Papers have covered topics such as the relationship of the superpowers, arms control at both the superpower and South-east Asian regional level, regional strategic relationships and major aspects of Australian defence policy. For a list of Canberra Papers, please refer to the last pages of this volume.

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Abstract

This work offers the first comprehensive study of small arms production and transfers, both licit and illicit, in Southeast Asia. It includes detailed country studies of all ten ASEAN states, covering national production, inventories and holdings, known imports and exports, societal problems with small arms and weaknesses in existing gun control legislation. It also summarises intra-state conflicts and addresses the sometimes considerable small-arms holdings of non-state actors such as insurgent groups and private armies. The study concludes that Southeast Asia has a serious problem with the leakage of legally-owned weapons and with the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, despite the growing international profile of small arms issues, ASEAN's members have been slow in taking effective action to combat illegal arms transfers.

Author

David Capie is a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the Institute of International Relations at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. He is the author of several articles and monographs on Asia-Pacific security, including most recently, with Paul M. Evans, *The Asia-Pacific Security Lexicon* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2002).

Notes on Sources

Most of the research for this book was carried out between July 2000 and April 2001. It is based on open source materials and interviews in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Representatives of the Lao, Brunei and Philippines governments were also interviewed outside their respective countries. In addition, the author carried out interviews with regional arms manufacturers, serving and former military personnel from ASEAN states, NGO representatives, academics, policy analysts, diplomats and journalists.

Because of the sensitivity that surrounds arms production and national security issues in many ASEAN states, a number of these people preferred to speak off the record or for background only. In accordance with their wishes they have not been identified here. Notes for all these interviews are in the possession of the author. While not identifying sources might leave some of the book's claims open to dispute, the subject matter meant more conventional and transparent methods were not possible. Wherever possible, corroboratory evidence has also been used to support claims made by anonymous sources.

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David Capie

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ACRONYMS

ABMS	Air-Burst Munition System
AEB	Arms and Explosives Branch
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AGL	Automatic Grenade Launcher
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ARMSCOR	Arms Corporation of the Philippines
ASEAN	Association for Southeast Asian Nations
AWPC	Army Weapon Production Centre
BA	Burma Arm
BCCI	Bank of Credit and Commerce International
BRIMOB	Indonesian Police Mobile Brigade
CFF	Cambodian Freedom Fighters
CIS	Chartered Industries of Singapore
CNC	Computer Numerically Controlled
CPSG	Centre for the Prevention and Suppression of Hired Gunmen
CSCAP	Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific
DAMCOR	Danao Arms Corporation
DKBA	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army
DPRK	Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea
EMEC	Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Corps
EU-ASAC	European Union's Assistance on Curbing Small Arms & Light Weapons in Cambodia
FALINTIL	Pro-independence forces in East Timor
FED	Firearms and Explosives Division
FIPL	Founders Industries Pte Limited
FN	Fabrique Nationale

FVM	Free Vietnam Movement
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement)
GL	Grenade Launcher
GLC	Government Linked Company
GPMG	General Purpose Machine Gun
GSC	Gunmen Suppression Centre
HE	High Explosive
HK	Heckler and Koch
HV	High Velocity
IIRO	International Islamic Relief Organisation
KA	Karenni Army
KNLA	Karen National Liberation Army
KNU	Karen National Union
LAD	Laser Aiming Device
LMG	Light Machine
LPA	Lao People's Army
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
LV	Low Velocity
MA	Myanmar Arm
MAA	Military Assistance Agreement
MAP	Military Assistance Program
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MPR	Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly
MTA	Mong Tai Army
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	New People's Army
NSCN	National Socialist Council of Nagaland
PAOCTF	Presidential Anti-Organised Crime Task Force
PAVN	People's Army of Vietnam
PLA	People's Liberation Army of Manipur
PNP	Philippines National Police
POF	Pakistan Ordnance Factories
PULO	Pattani United Liberation Organisation
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing
RCAF	Royal Cambodian Armed Forces

RPG	Rocket-Propelled Grenade
RPM	Rounds Per Minute
SAF	Singapore Armed Forces
SAM	Surface-to-Air Missile
SAR	Singapore Assault Rifle
SAS	Special Air Service
SAW	Section Assault Weapon
SD	Self Destruct
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SME	Syarikat Malaysia Explosives
SMEO	SME Ordnance
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
SRDP	Self-Reliant Defence Posture
SSA	Shan State Army
ST	Singapore Technologies
STC	Singapore Technology Corporation
TMP	Tactical Mission Pistol
TNI	Indonesian Armed Forces
UI	Unicorn International
ULNLF	United Lao National Liberation Front
UNLFA	United Liberation Front of Asom
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UWSA	United Wa State Army
WGWR	Working Group for Weapons Reduction
WORLD-MPC	Workers League of Danao Multi-Purpose Cooperative

Introduction

Small arms and light weapons have been responsible for the overwhelming number of deaths in armed conflicts since 1945. For most of this time these weapons were seen simply as the most basic pieces of military equipment, uncontroversial and, unlike weapons of mass destruction, largely unregulated. However, in the late 1990s several factors have worked to bring them to the attention of the international community.¹ First, since the end of the Cold War there has been a shift in the nature of armed conflict from inter-state to intra-state wars. In these conflicts most casualties have been caused by small arms and light weapons—not large conventional systems. In Somalia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and East Timor these casualties were also predominantly civilians, not combatants.² Second, in response to these intra-state conflicts the 1990s also saw the expansion of multilateral peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations. During UN operations in Cambodia, Rwanda, Somalia, Angola, Albania, Bosnia and East Timor, large stocks of uncontrolled small arms presented a significant threat to the security of peacekeepers. Finally, the development and spread of broader concepts of security during the 1990s helped redefine the international security agenda. Traditional notions of 'national security' that focused primarily on securing the interests of states at the expense of individual rights or humanitarian concerns, began to be challenged by new concepts. The growing acceptance of ideas like 'human security' has helped bring humanitarian issues to the attention of policymakers and officials. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the successful campaign against anti-personnel mines.

Together, these three factors have helped spur a burgeoning international interest in the challenges posed by the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.³ Encouraged by their success with the Ottawa Convention on Landmines, coalitions of NGOs and groups from civil society have urged governments to take action to control the spread of small arms. These, they argue, are the 'real instruments of war', responsible for more civilian deaths in conflict than weapons of mass destruction or anti-personnel mines, and equally in need of international regulation and controls.⁴

A growing number of states have also shown a keen interest in controlling the proliferation of light weapons. Some, such as Canada, Japan and Norway, have made small arms initiatives a central part of their foreign policy agendas.⁵ Others have been more cautious, but even many of the states that opposed the landmines ban see it as in their interests to control the *illegal* trade in small arms, weapons that often end up in the hands of criminals or anti-government insurgents. In October 1998, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) signed a Moratorium on the Exportation, Importation and Manufacture of Light Weapons.⁶ Likewise, the Organisation of American

States (OAS) has adopted an Inter-American Convention against the illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms, ammunition and explosives.⁷ To try and develop a global response to the problem, the United Nations convened a major conference on the illicit small arms trade in all its aspects in New York in July 2001.

For all the increased interest in the subject, however, most analysts admit too little is known about the legal small arms trade, let alone illicit trafficking. Certainly, in comparison to the trade in larger conventional weapons, small arms have received negligible scrutiny. While the availability of information is improving — for example through the development of the Geneva-based publication *Small Arms Survey* — gathering information about small arms production and transfers remains an important empirical challenge.⁸ This study seeks to make a contribution to the growing literature on the subject by offering the first comprehensive study of small arms production and transfers, both licit and illicit, in Southeast Asia. It provides detailed country studies of all ten ASEAN states, covering national inventories and holdings, known imports and exports, societal problems with small arms and weaknesses in existing gun control legislation. It also summarises intra-state conflicts and addresses the sometimes considerable small arms holdings of non-state actors such as insurgent groups and private armies.

The book is in five chapters. This introduction addresses some of the key definitional issues raised by terms like ‘small arms’ as well as the difficulty of distinguishing between the lawful and illicit small arms trade. The second chapter provides an introduction to legal arms production and trade in the ASEAN region, identifying the known producers and exporters of small arms and ammunition in ASEAN. The third chapter provides an analysis of the problem of illicit transfers and production in Southeast Asia. It identifies the key factors that are driving the illicit trade in the region. The fourth chapter is a collection of detailed country studies, examining small arms issues in all ten ASEAN member states.

The study concludes that Southeast Asia has a serious problem with the control of legally-owned weapons and with the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, despite the recent flurry of international attention, ASEAN’s members have been slow in taking effective action to combat illegal arms transfers.⁹ The fifth section contains some policy suggestions that decision makers in ASEAN and regional institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum might wish to consider to meet the small arms challenge.

What are small arms?

In common parlance the term ‘small arms’ describes weapons ranging from clubs, knives and machetes through to light machine guns. In the government and academic literature, however, the term has acquired has a narrower

meaning. 'Small arms' are generally considered to be weapons 'manufactured to military specifications' that are designed 'for personal use' as opposed to those requiring several people or a crew to operate and maintain.¹⁰ According to a 1997 report by a United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, the category includes 'revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns' as well as the ammunition they require.¹¹ Various hand-grenades and portable explosive devices are also included.¹²

While some analysts use a slightly broader definition, the UN Panel of Experts' approach has found wide acceptance among both governments and non-governmental groups.¹³ Accordingly, this monograph treats the panel's definition as authoritative. While focusing predominantly on small arms, however, it also makes references to weapons systems that might be better classified as light weapons rather than small arms *per se* (for example, light mortars, general purpose machine guns and grenade launchers). Identifying transfers of light weapons can provide a useful indicator of the scale of all arms smuggling. Given that illegal consignments of weapons to insurgents and terrorists usually include both small arms and light weapons it seems to make more sense, where possible, to identify all the types of arms seized, rather than simply list the small arms. To do otherwise would risk portraying a less than complete picture of the size of consignments and the sophistication of smuggling operations.

'Legitimate' and 'illicit' transfers

For the purposes of this study, a 'transfer' is understood to be a transaction that results in a change of title or control over any small arms and/or any physical movement of small arms from one jurisdiction to another. Such 'transfers' include not only direct sales of small arms, but also exchanges, barter-arrangements, gifts, thefts, loss, loans and transactions conducted for foreign aid or credit.

Determining what constitutes a 'legitimate' and an 'illicit' transfer is a more complex and controversial issue.¹⁴ According to the UN's Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, the right of states to export and import small arms is implicit in the UN Charter's recognition of the right to individual and collective self-defence.¹⁵ Apart from that, however, the Panel of Experts was unable to agree on what constituted a legitimate as opposed to an illicit transfer. Their report noted that 'there are no globally agreed norms and standards' concerning small arms and rather vaguely defined illicit arms trafficking as 'that international trade in conventional arms which is contrary to the laws of States and/or international law'.¹⁶

At the domestic level it is relatively simple to distinguish between licit and illicit transfers. All states in Southeast Asia distinguish between groups and

individuals who are lawfully entitled to possess small arms and those who are not (even if in practice this distinction is sometimes ignored).¹⁷ Consequently, the transfer of small arms from a lawful possessor (for example, a member of the military or the police) to an unauthorised party or individual within the state would clearly constitute an illegal transfer. The unlicensed or unauthorised export of those weapons by a group or individual to another party outside the state (whether a state or non-state actor) would also be a criminal act.

But what about the situation where a state covertly transfers small arms to a non-state actor in another country? This would clearly be illegal in the jurisdiction where the arms are imported, but the transaction's status at international law is hotly disputed. In 1999 the Canadian government offered a draft treaty to outlaw all transfers between states and non-state actors but this was vigorously opposed by the United States.¹⁸ The US argued that states should have the right to supply arms to groups fighting oppressive regimes. For the moment the situation is deadlocked and the status of transfers between a state and a non-state actor at international law remains murky.

To get around this impasse, this report uses a simple, three-part typology to distinguish between different kinds of small arms transfers. The three types are: (1) clearly lawful transfers; (2) 'black-market' or illicit transfers; and (3) 'grey market' transfers.

In terms of lawful transactions, Keith Krause identifies three distinct sets of clients for small arms transfers from a producer: national arsenals (transfers to the state's military or police forces), non-state actors (both domestic and extra-national) and foreign governments.¹⁹ These transfers are regulated by domestic laws and export/import regulations in the supplier and recipient states. In the case of international transfers there is also consensus that to be lawful, a transfer cannot breach a United Nations arms embargo.

The key distinction between illicit 'black market' and grey market sales is the involvement of state actors. Grey market transfers include secret and legally questionable transfers from states to non-state actors in another country against the wishes of the importing government. They also include shipments made knowingly from a government to domestic political allies, militias and the like. Often these transfers violate the law or export regulations in the supplier state, but they are made possible through deals arranged by intelligence services with the tacit or active approval of the state's political leadership. While grey market transfers may sometimes be handled by private arms dealers or brokers, these are usually working at the behest of an intelligence or military agency. Unlike black market sales, grey market transfers are almost always motivated by political objectives rather than profit.

In contrast, black market and illicit sales are carried out by private entities (whether individuals or companies) and lack the requisite authorisation of a

responsible official in the source or supplier state. They are illegal at domestic law and, when they involve extra-national shipments, are not supported or approved by the appropriate government authorities in the exporting or importing state. Financial gain is the principal motivation for black market sales. These transactions can include everything from the sale of single weapons by disgruntled soldiers to well organised commercial transfers to pariah or embargoed governments. They can involve sales to local warlords, criminals or insurgents as well supplies to insurgents overseas.²⁰

This three-part typology recognises the uncertain and evolving state of international law as it relates to small arms. It also offers a flexible analytical framework capable of capturing the full range of arms transfers within ASEAN. For as we shall see, in Southeast Asia today there is a significant legal trade in small arms and light weapons, but a vast number of weapons are also moved in illicit and grey market transfers.

Small Arms Production and Transfers in Southeast Asia

Small arms production in Southeast Asia predates the emergence of the modern system of states in the region. Prior to Indonesian independence, Dutch colonists ran several small arms companies around the Javanese city of Bandung. In 1917, the Philippines, still under US colonial rule, proposed legislation to build a factory to make arms and ammunition. But despite these early efforts and plans, it was not until after World War II that modern arms industries as we understand them today began to be created by Southeast Asia's new states. Since then much has changed. The diffusion of advanced technology has made modern military weapons easier to produce. The end of the Cold War has likewise changed the incentives for local production. For all these changes, however, most states in Southeast Asia are still trying to find ways to meet their own basic defence needs.

This chapter provides a broad overview of the state of legal small arms production in Southeast Asia today. It identifies regional producers of small arms and ammunition, the types of weapons they manufacture and the rationales underpinning local production. It also addresses the sensitive issue of small arms transfers and sales: who is selling what to whom? What drives the export of small arms and ammunition? While more detailed answers to these questions are provided in the ten country studies that follow, this chapter is designed to serve as a general introduction to the lawful production and trade in small arms in ASEAN.

Production in ASEAN

The basic small arms and light weapons required by a modern military force include a standard infantry weapon (usually an automatic rifle of some kind), light machine gun, light mortars and grenade launchers, as well as the ammunition needed for the operation of these weapons. The technology to produce these weapons systems is not complicated and is widely diffused. More than 25 countries in the developing world produce their own small arms.¹

Of the ten ASEAN member states, five are currently producing weapons that fall under the UN Panel of Experts' definition of small arms. They are Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Two other states, Malaysia and Vietnam, are not believed to produce any weapons as such, but have produced small arms in the past. Malaysia manufactured rifles until as recently as February 2001, when its state-owned arms producer closed down. It continues to manufacture ammunition. Vietnam apparently produced an assault rifle during the war with the United States and currently has the ability to refurbish arms, producing weapons that are as good as new. Vietnam has also stepped up its efforts to acquire weapons production

technologies and may seek to produce its own arms again in the future. Three ASEAN states — Laos, Cambodia and Brunei — are non-producers. According to all available information, including statements by their respective government officials, they do not produce small arms, ammunition or spare parts.

What do they produce?

Six regional states manufacture their own spare parts and/or small calibre ammunition. Typically this ammunition includes 9mm, 5.56mm and 7.62mm rounds, with the mix depending on the type and calibre of the weapons used by their respective police and armed forces. The scale of production varies, but Singapore, Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines each has the capability to produce tens of millions of rounds annually. All six are believed to be self-sufficient in small calibre ammunition, although in some cases (for example, Malaysia) they are not producing anywhere near to capacity due to a lack of demand.² Little is known about Vietnam's ammunition supply. Informed sources in Hanoi suggest that Vietnam does not produce its own small arms ammunition, but rather relies on imports. Recent attempts to acquire arms production technologies from abroad may allow for ammunition production in the future, but this cannot be confirmed at the present time.

Seven ASEAN states have at some time manufactured automatic rifles. As has been the case throughout the developing world, this manufacturing typically began with licensed production arranged through a foreign supplier.³ During the 1970s and early 1980s Singapore and the Philippines manufactured models of the M16A1 assault rifle under licence from the American company Colt. Thailand has produced two Heckler and Koch rifles, the HK33, which it assembled from parts, and the HK21E, which it produced under licence. Both Malaysia and the Philippines, also licensed, produced Heckler and Koch weapons and until recently Malaysia was also manufacturing the Austrian Steyr AUG rifle. Indonesia produced the Italian BM59 rifle and Model 12 submachine gun under licence from Beretta and later made the Belgian FN-FNC rifle under licence from Fabrique Nationale. Vietnam has also produced its own copy of the Chinese Type 56 assault rifle (itself a copy of the AK47) called the K-50M.

Today, only three ASEAN states produce assault rifles. Singapore manufactures its indigenously-designed SAR 21; Indonesia continues to manufacture the SS-1, a variant of the FN-FNC; and Myanmar produces two 5.56mm rifles, designated MA-1 and MA-2. (All these weapons and their capabilities are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.)

Singapore and Myanmar also produce their own light machine guns (LMG). Singapore Technologies' 5.56mm Ultimax-100 is often praised for its light weight and low recoil. It is an important part of the Singapore Armed Forces' (SAF) inventory and has been exported to a number of foreign markets,

including several in Asia and the Pacific. Myanmar's new range of indigenous weapons also includes a light machine gun designated MA-3, although details are sketchy. One possibility is that it is simply a version of the 5.56mm EMERK-1 assault rifle with a heavier barrel. Malaysia recently halted production of the Steyr AUG, which could fulfil a LMG role. Neither Thailand nor the Philippines is producing rifles or LMGs at present.

At least six ASEAN states have the capacity to make their own mortar tubes and mortar ammunition, even if they are not currently manufacturing these products. Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia each produces a range of 60mm and 81mm mortar bombs. All five are also known to produce (or have until recently) a range of grenades. These include hand grenades and low velocity rifle-launched grenades, such as the type that can be fired from an American M203 grenade launcher attached to an M16. Some states also make high velocity (HV) 40mm grenades for use with automatic grenade launchers. Both Singapore and Indonesia produce an automatic grenade launcher. (Indonesia makes the Singaporean CIS 40mm AGL under licence from Singapore Technologies.) It is not known whether Vietnam has the ability to produce its own mortars and mortar bombs.

Why produce?

There are several rationales for the production of small arms by ASEAN states, but by far the most important is the desire for greater autonomy in determining their own national security affairs. As Bilveer Singh and Kwa Chong Kuan note, 'Defence industrialisation has become an integral part of a country's defence capability'.⁴ An indigenous defence industry is perceived as strengthening national defence capabilities, enhancing political autonomy as well as being symbolic of greater national sovereignty.

All ASEAN members want to reduce their dependence on outside arms suppliers. Many regional states have complained about delays in acquiring spare parts from producers in the developed world or long waits before purchases are approved under the US's Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. They also fear that foreign suppliers may not prove reliable in a time of crisis for political reasons, or that supplies might be halted by an international arms embargo or boycott. This is already a reality for Myanmar's military regime, which has faced an informal arms embargo from some major suppliers in the European Union and the United States since the late 1980s. Indonesia also found itself under an arms embargo after violence erupted in East Timor in September 1999. Even states not immediately threatened by embargo are concerned to maintain their autonomy in arms acquisitions. For example, Singapore's deeply rooted sense of insecurity as a comparatively young, small state surrounded by larger potential adversaries has given it a strong desire to avoid dependence on foreign suppliers for basic military equipment.⁵ As its former

Foreign Minister S. Rajaretnam warned the UN General Assembly in 1976:

The flow of arms carries with it a measure of dependency on the part of the client on the seller of arms not unlike that prevailing under the old imperial system... The massive flow of arms to the third world confronts it with a new danger. It is, first of all, a drain on the economies of third world countries; but even more important is the fact that it creates a new form of dependence on the great powers, which can exploit the third world's dependence on them to manipulate them, to engineer conflicts between them, and to use them as proxies in their competition for influence and dominance.⁶

This primary objective of preserving national autonomy is reflected in the types of small arms products being made in the region. While a state can survive an arms embargo if it already has sufficient weapons in its national inventory, it cannot fight without the ability to replenish its ammunition supply and provide spare parts from a local source. Not surprisingly then, most ASEAN producers make their own ammunition and spares.

Economic incentives

Economic incentives represent another particularly important reason for local production.⁷ Domestic manufacturing in ASEAN is often based on the expectation that it will reduce the cost of weapons. Manufacturing small arms locally can, at least in theory, also save hard currency that would otherwise be spent on imports. This has been an important, if secondary, factor in the development of Myanmar's defence industries and it also influenced Malaysia's decision to produce its own ammunition after it acquired M16 rifles.⁸

Second, producing weapons and ammunition locally creates jobs, especially for the less skilled.⁹ These offset the cost of the acquisition of the weapons and doubtless have political appeal. Historically, most ASEAN states have had mixed economies in which there is little reluctance on the part of the state to play an active role in the industrial sector and labour market. Calling small arms companies 'strategic industries', as Indonesia has, helps make what are essentially large state subsidies more palatable.

In reality, however, many of the alleged economic benefits of indigenous small arms production often prove to be illusory. Unless there is a ready local supply of the raw materials needed for making arms and ammunition, it is hard to avoid the cost of some imports. Even where a state has a comparative advantage with lower labour costs, the expense of importing raw materials like brass rods and primers for ammunition means local production can often be more expensive than buying products on the open market. For example, officials from Malaysia's state-owned arms company SME admit that because of their dependence on raw materials imported from Europe, their ammunition costs between 5 and 20 per cent more than similar products available on the

market. This is also true for weapons, particularly since the end of the Cold War, as large quantities of small arms from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc states have flooded what was already a buyer's market.

Reconciling a desire for national autonomy with the need to balance the books has caused a dilemma for some regional policymakers. In the case of the most basic defence goods such as ammunition, most states in ASEAN have so far opted for autonomy over economic imperatives. In the wake of the regional economic crisis, however, there are signs that the balance might be shifting. Malaysia's decision to close its national small arms producer and Indonesia's recent decision to acquire Chinese-made mortar bombs (and, possibly in the future, infantry weapons) suggests that economic rationality might play a greater part in decisions about indigenous small arms production in the future.¹⁰

Technology transfer

In addition to the desire for autonomy and economic incentives, another important rationale for local production is technology transfer. A persistent demand of many ASEAN states when dealing with arms manufacturers in the developed world is that suppliers transfer not just the arms, but also the technology and knowledge required to produce and maintain them.¹¹ Singapore's defence industries have insisted on this almost from the moment they were created. According to a recent history of Singapore Technologies, the company 'adopted the principle that every licensed production contract must include technology transfer and the appropriate training packages'.¹²

As well as increasing the defence technology base, technology transfer offers the possibility of developing new dual-use and civilian products. As Singh and Kwa note, the establishment of a domestic arms industry 'may give an impetus to scientific research and the technological progress of the country'.¹³ Few states in the region can afford to have an arms manufacturer that does not make other products as well. Indonesia's Pindad PT advertises an extensive range of commercial products, including generators, casting products, automotive and aircraft components.¹⁴ Singapore's defence industries also stress the large quantity of non-defence products and services they offer, including aircraft and automotive production, servicing and repair. While small arms production offers fewer opportunities for commercial technology transfer than, for example, military aircraft or vehicle production, those benefits that can be had provide another incentive or justification for pursuing local production over imports.

Exports

As was noted above, when proposals for indigenous small arms production are debated, the desire for national security autonomy often runs into questions of economic rationality. Many ASEAN states, often with modest

standing armies, cannot justify the expense involved the creation of an indigenous small arms industry for such small production runs. One solution, however, that allows for both the preservation of state autonomy and a degree of cost management is to pursue export sales.

While there are several rationales for the transfer of small arms from ASEAN producer states, the primary motivation for such transfers is commercial. Arms sales generate revenue and the income raised by exports helps offset the initial investment made by the producer state in its local manufacturing capacity. Revenue can also be re-directed into new production, future research efforts or into military budgets to cover budgetary shortfalls.

Second, exporting weapons allows for longer production runs, which lower the per unit cost of weapons and also keep facilities and employees working. It also has the advantage of permitting a state to have 'surge capacity' in a time of national emergency or conflict.

Third, the export of small arms can also provide a producer state with potential non-economic benefits. These include the opportunity to supply allies, or to acquire influence with a neighbour or potentially important regional state. Singapore's low-profile but high-volume arms trade with Myanmar is motivated in no small part by strategic calculations about the future role of Burma and China in Southeast Asia.¹⁵

Similar notions also inform extra-regional suppliers such as China and the United States. The US is an important supplier of small arms to Southeast Asia, and while today these transfers are mostly dictated by commercial rather than geostrategic interests, it retains an interest in maintaining links with former purchasers of its military arms. For evidence one only needs to look at the enormous number of weapons 'gifted' or sold at bargain basement prices to allies like Thailand and the Philippines. Likewise, China is also using small arms transfers to try to enhance its own influence in the region. Transfers to Laos and Myanmar have been motivated by some important non-economic interests, including China's general desire to establish a greater role in Southeast Asian politics and the more specific objective of acquiring signals intelligence posts in southern Laos and the Andaman Sea. More recently, India's concerns about growing Chinese influence in Southeast Asia have also led it to offer small arms and assistance to states like Myanmar and Vietnam.

In this respect indigenous manufacturing of weapons can offer ASEAN states some major advantages over licensed production. Under licensing agreements with suppliers in the developed world, states are sometimes limited in terms of the export opportunities they are allowed to pursue. Sometime this is for commercial reasons. For example, Colt did not permit Singapore to export its locally-made M16 other than for a limited post-production period, for fear that Singapore might exploit its comparative advantage in labour costs to sell a quality product at a cheaper price. Heckler and Koch likewise did not permit

the export of weapons produced under licence in Thailand.¹⁶ But sometimes these limitations are imposed to give the licensing state some control over where its weapons end up. Sweden, for example, requires that Singapore get its consent before transferring the 84mm rockets that Chartered Industries makes under licence from Forenade Fabriksverken.¹⁷ This became an issue in the early 1990s after there were reports Singapore had sold the rockets to Myanmar.¹⁸

Who exports?

Of the ASEAN states currently producing small arms, six are known to have exported either arms or ammunition in the past. Of these, Singapore is by far the most important. Indeed, Singapore Technologies is the only manufacturer in Southeast Asia genuinely able to compete in the international small arms market. Singapore has exported arms almost since the creation of its defence industries in the late 1960s. As well as selling ammunition throughout Southeast Asia and internationally, it has also been successful in selling some of its weapons, mostly to markets in the developing world. It has sold M16 (Model 614S), SAR-80, SR-88 and SR-88A assault rifles to Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Slovenia, the Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Singapore's Ultimax light machine gun is used by Croatia, Slovenia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands and Zimbabwe.¹⁹ According to Singapore Technologies, the CIS 40mm GL grenade launcher has been sold 'around the world', and its 40mm Automatic Grenade Launcher is made under licence in Indonesia.²⁰ Grenades for 40mm AGL have been sold to Indonesia and to Sweden.

Malaysia has also sold some of its weapons in the past, although not nearly on the same scale as Singapore (hence the recent closure of its state-owned producer SME Technologies.) According to company officials, small consignments of its Steyr AUG assault rifle were sold to Pakistan (presumably for reshipment) and a few dozen Steyr Tactical Mission Pistols (TMPs) were sold to the Philippines. Malaysia has sold ammunition on the open market, again with mixed success. Past clients include Nigeria, New Zealand and private buyers in the United States.

Indonesia's arms producer, Pindad PT, produces a wide variety of conventional weapons systems which it offers for sale. It does not appear to have exported its SS-1 series of rifles to another state, although the company is keen to develop an export market. While there are rumours that Pindad rifles have been transferred to rebel groups fighting along the Thai-Burma border, this cannot be confirmed. Pindad has had a little more luck with its ammunition, which it has sold it to various states in Southeast Asia, apparently including Thailand. According to industry reports, however, in recent years Pindad has found the competition from Singapore extremely tough.

Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam have also sold quantities of arms to the region. According to officials of Thailand's Army Weapon's Production Centre, 2 per cent of its total output between 1998 and 2000 was exported to Malaysia and Singapore, presumably for re-export. The Philippines' gun industry also sells arms and ammunition. Its largest private producer, ARMSCOR, claims to have sold its products to more than 22 countries. The Philippines' state arms producer, Government Arsenal, tried to break into exports during the 1980s, but was unable to do so because of restrictions under Filipino law. It recently expressed a renewed desire to pursue foreign sales following changes in the law.

Vietnam has exported the American arms it seized when it defeated the US-backed South Vietnamese regime in 1975. Transfers of these weapons went to Cuba (and from there to Central America) and to communist rebels fighting in the Philippines. Today, there are reports that Vietnam continues to sell stocks of Vietnam war surplus. The Hanoi-based 'General Import-Export Van Xuan Corporation' (VAXUCO) is a Ministry of Defence owned company that deals in 'spare parts', which are reputed to include small arms. In addition, Vietnam supplied arms and ammunition to the communist regime it established in Cambodia after its invasion in late 1978. It has also provided its close ally Laos with some weapons and ammunition.

Finally, the only one of the ASEAN small arms producers not known to have exported arms or ammunition is Myanmar. Its small arms production to date has been driven by its own considerable domestic demand. There have been no recorded instances of weapons sales or transfers and, while one 1998 report suggested that the government had the long-term goal of exporting ordnance and small arms to earn foreign exchange, no evidence to support this claim was offered.²¹

Future trends

Small arms production in Southeast Asia has developed significantly over the past three decades. Previously, all regional states were wholly dependent on the supply of small arms from producers in the developed world. Today, at least five of the ten ASEAN states can produce their own arms and six are more or less self-sufficient in small calibre ammunition and ordnance. Singapore has become a major player in the international arms market, and now licenses the production of its own weapons. But while modern military small arms production in ASEAN has come a long way in a comparatively short time, questions remain about its future.

While too little is still known about the economics of small arms production in the region, it seems likely that producing small arms and ammunition locally rather than buying on the open market is not an economically rational

choice for most ASEAN states. The flood of former-Soviet and Eastern Bloc small arms onto the world market and the need to import raw materials for ammunition production makes it extremely difficult for Southeast Asian products cannot compete internationally on price. Tough competition within ASEAN has further reduced the opportunities for revenue generation through exports. Under such conditions, only those producers offering a range of advanced products at competitive prices and with an established supply and marketing structure will prosper. In Southeast Asia, there is only one producer in this class, Singapore Technologies. As Malaysia's SME Technologies found out recently, failure to develop export markets can lead to closure.

It remains to be seen what the economics of small arms production will mean for other regional producers. There will no doubt continue to be pressure on ASEAN governments to sustain local arms industries for a variety of non-economic reasons, in particular national autonomy. In some cases, corruption may also be a factor in sustaining government subsidies. Certainly, as long as states believe they are facing serious internal or external security challenges then they are likely to maintain their own production capabilities. But should these challenges be overcome, in quasi-democratic states like the Philippines and Indonesia it may become more difficult to persuade the public that the symbolic value of a highly subsidised arms industry is worth the cost. While a cascade of closures is not likely to occur, national producers in states like the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand may be forced to consolidate their production, focusing perhaps exclusively on the manufacture of ammunition and spares. It is possible, therefore, that the closure of Malaysia's SME and the decision of the Indonesian military to buy mortar ordnance from China rather than from its own national producer, Pindad PT, may be signs of things to come.

Illicit Small Arms Transfers In Southeast Asia

This chapter introduces the problem of the illicit transfer and production of small arms in Southeast Asia. It is in three parts. First, it identifies the five key factors that drive the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Southeast Asia, on both the supply and demand side. Second, it outlines the various sources of illegal weapons, including leakage, large commercial sales and grey market transfers. It notes the major supply routes through the region and discusses the supply of small arms into Southeast Asia from extra-regional actors. Third, it touches on the challenge small arms smuggling represents for some of the weaker members of ASEAN.

There are some methodological caveats that need to be noted before making claims about the shape and size of illicit arms transfers in a region like Southeast Asia. By its very nature the illicit arms trade is secretive and actors involved in the sale and movement of illegal weapons are reluctant to talk to researchers. For equally obvious reasons the users of small arms such as rebel groups are cautious about identifying their suppliers, nor do they typically maintain records of their acquisitions or inventories. It is therefore difficult to measure and describe precisely the regional trade in illicit small arms. Reported seizures or arrests provide clues, but if the trade in illegal drugs provides any parallel, these are likely just the tip of the iceberg. It is, however, possible to identify broad trends in the chain of supply and demand, to note the types of weapons being moved, and the various motivations that lead to illicit arms transfers.¹ This is a limited but important objective, particularly given the well-established link between illegal weapons movements and violent conflict.

Factors driving the trade

Five factors determine the shape of illicit arms transfers in Southeast Asia. First, the large number of intra-state conflicts in the region and the concomitant need for illegally sourced weapons among non-state actors. Second, the region is home to several post-conflict states where large numbers of military small arms and light weapons can be easily obtained. Third, Southeast Asia's long maritime and continental frontiers are extremely difficult to monitor and police. The fourth and related point is that the region is home to a significant number of 'weak states'. These are political entities that lack the capacity to effectively control their borders and interdict arms traffickers and other transnational criminal activities. Such states also often store national inventories of legally owned small arms in insecure and poorly managed facilities, making theft, loss and consequently smuggling possible. Many also lack adequate domestic gun control legislation and enforcement. Fifth, despite the absence of overt inter-state conflict in the region for more than two decades and the welcome development of regional institutions, suspicions and mistrust

persist in many parts of Southeast Asia. While the Cold War practice of supplying weapons to insurgents in neighbouring countries has largely been delegitimised as an instrument of national policy, some recent instances reveal that it has not disappeared completely. In summary, in Southeast Asia today there is a significant demand for weapons, a ready supply, and many states lack the capacity to police what are often long and porous borders. The combination makes an ideal environment for illicit arms transfers.

The demand: intra-state conflict

While Southeast Asia has not seen a major inter-state conflict for more than 20 years, a large number of intra-state conflicts continue to be fought in the region. Of these, the most bloody are in Aceh, Maluku and Kalimantan in Indonesia, in Mindanao in the southern Philippines and along Myanmar's borders with Thailand, India and Bangladesh. Other low-intensity conflicts are simmering in Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and West Papua. The intra-state nature of these conflicts supports the regional proliferation of illegal small arms for two reasons.

First, while inter-state warfare is typically fought with heavy conventional weapons such as artillery, aircraft and tanks, in intra-state conflicts small arms are the weapons of choice.² They are light, affordable, easily concealed and transported, highly durable and simple to maintain. They are easy to use (an important factor for what are often untrained irregular forces) and extremely lethal. For example, an assault rifle like the Chinese Norinco Type 56 (a copy of the Russian AK47), which is ubiquitous in zones of conflict in the region, has a rate of fire of 600 rounds per minute. Small arms are also better suited to the military tactics employed by insurgent groups, typically terrorist attacks, guerrilla operations and ambushes. Consequently rebel forces throughout the region maintain inventories that are often exclusively made up of small arms and light weapons: pistols, submachine guns, sniper rifles, assault rifles, grenade launchers, light machine guns and light mortars. Some also reportedly have access to anti-tank weapons and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs).³

Second, while states can easily procure these weapons on the legal international market, it is generally more difficult for non-state actors to obtain weapons through licit channels. Some simply lack the resources to buy new or even used modern military equipment. With the end of the Cold War most of the ideological rationales for supporting regional insurgent groups have vanished and the largesse of once-generous patrons like the United States has also disappeared.⁴ Groups like the Karen rebels fighting along the Thai-Burma border have complained that their supplies of arms and ammunition are low and they lack the resources needed to replenish stocks.⁵ For such groups getting arms and ammunition *cheaply* is crucial. They can only afford used (sometimes near obsolescent) small arms, weapons that can be most easily obtained illegally.

On the other hand, there are several non-state actors in the region for whom money is not a problem. The most prominent of these at present are the Abu Sayyaf group in the Southern Philippines and the pro-Yangon United Wa State Army (UWSA) in Myanmar. Abu Sayyaf successfully traded hostages for several million dollars in ransom in 2000 and the UWSA has reportedly made large profits through drug production and sales, particularly the trafficking of methamphetamines into Thailand.⁶ But even for these comparatively wealthy groups, it is difficult to find willing sellers on the legal international arms market. There is an emerging norm, shared by some important supplier states, that states should not sell weapons into zones of intra-state conflict.⁷ This obstacle forces even well-funded insurgent groups to turn to the illicit weapons market instead. There, brokers and arms dealers can obtain and supply significant quantities of used military hardware at an affordable price and, more importantly, with no questions asked.

The supply: post-conflict states

If the prevalence of intra-state conflict sustains a demand for small arms, then the ubiquity of military weapons in parts of Southeast Asia offers a ready supply. As Krause has noted 'unlike the trade in conventional weapons, much of the trade in small arms and light weapons concerns *existing stockpiles* not new production'.⁸ This is certainly the case in Southeast Asia, where most small arms used in violent struggles are recycled weapons from former conflicts.

While no authoritative figures exist, a vast number of small arms and light weapons continue to circulate in several ASEAN states. Vietnam and Cambodia inherited some two million firearms and 150,000 tonnes of ammunition after the US withdrawal in 1975. Even after a government crackdown, there are still believed to be between 500,000 and one million military-style weapons circulating in Cambodia alone.⁹ The Philippines is another highly weaponised society, with between 600,000 and 700,000 guns registered with the Philippines National Police (PNP).¹⁰ Estimates as to the number of unregistered arms in circulation vary wildly, ranging from 270,000 to 600,000 weapons.¹¹ A Philippines Center for Transnational Crime report, citing the PNP's Firearms and Explosives Division (FED), comes up with a figure closer to 350,000, dividing the total into 189,766 'un-re-registered', weapons, 2,156 firearms that are 'lost' and 157,860 weapons simply designated as 'loose'.¹² In addition, unlike Cambodia, the Philippines has its own major gun industry and its own annual output continues to add to these totals.

There are three important channels through which these weapons are diverted to the illicit arms circuit. First, there is 'leakage' where weapons are sold or stolen from legitimately held inventories or stockpiles. Second, there are various commercially motivated sales of small arms and light weapons to

unauthorised actors. These can vary from just a few weapons, to consignments of modern weapons and ammunition worth tens of millions of dollars. Third, there are grey market, politically motivated transfers to non-state actors, which occur with the knowledge and approval of the exporting government.

Leakage

One of the most important sources of weapons for any insurgent group has always been its opponents and Southeast Asia today is no exception. Rebel forces rely heavily on small arms that they either capture from security forces in combat, that they buy from disaffected or corrupt soldiers or that they steal from poorly guarded government arsenals. Incidents involving this kind of illegal leakage from national inventories and stockpiles plague Southeast Asia.

Cambodia's leakage problem is the worst in the region. A European Union-funded program for the collection and destruction of surplus weapons (EU-ASAC) has documented the poor quality of storage facilities for the thousands of confiscated weapons housed throughout the country. Often large numbers of weapons taken from demobilised soldiers and armed civilians are stored in unlocked sheds, police stations or poorly guarded depots.¹³ Once there, they make a tempting target for poorly paid military personnel seeking to supplement their wages.

In addition to small-scale leakage, it is widely known in Cambodia that corrupt elements in the armed forces and police directly supply weapons to criminal gangs and arms dealers. While an April 1999 government sub-decree has made gun possession illegal, sources say illegal arms are still easy to buy. Phnom Penh's infamous *Tuk Thla* market, which once openly displayed military hardware for sale now only overtly sells uniforms and equipment, but a complete range of military products is still available. Vendors take potential buyers to locations away from the market where weapons are available for inspection and purchase. According to informed sources in Phnom Penh, most of the arms sold through *Tuk Thla* come from military warehouses.¹⁴

Leakage has also been a serious problem in Indonesia. During the recent violence in Maluku many military weapons were stolen from overrun police stations and military armouries. For example, in just one attack on a police station in Tantui in July 2000, 823 military-style rifles were stolen. Of these 115 were later recovered, but more than 700 of the weapons apparently remain in circulation.¹⁵ In more recent fighting in central Kalimantan, smaller numbers of military weapons were also stolen from security forces in the town of Sampit.¹⁶ On Java, there have been accusations that weapons and explosives have gone missing from the country's sole arms producer, PT Pindad. These captured the headlines in 2000 when it was revealed that the explosives used in a bomb found outside the Attorney-General's office in Jakarta were from Pindad's Bandung factory.¹⁷

Indonesia is also an example of another kind of illegal transfer, the deliberate arming of combatants by security personnel. According to reports, the Indonesian military (TNI) has provided local Muslim forces in Maluku with military weapons while the Indonesian police (BRIMOB) provided small arms to the territory's Christian forces. A similar practice took place in East Timor before the United Nations intervention in September 1999. In Aceh the TNI has had to face the reality that many of its own soldiers are selling their weapons to GAM rebels.¹⁸

In the Philippines, insurgent groups openly admit that their most important sources of weapons are the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippines National Police (PNP).¹⁹ As well as weapons stolen, lost or captured during combat, rebel groups have also been known to raid AFP arms depots, municipal armouries and have even seized small arms from civilian competitors in shooting competitions.²⁰ In addition, there is the endemic problem of corruption by law enforcement and security personnel. A raid in September 2000 netted ten men in Bulacan and Nueva Ecija provinces along with various assault rifles, grenade launchers, machine guns, mortars, explosives and ammunition, that were destined for an unspecified rebel group in Mindanao. According to the police, 'most of the weapons [could] only be found in the government's armory'.²¹

But the problem of leakage is not just limited to the region's less developed states. The issue was highlighted in Malaysia in July 2000, when a large cache of military weapons was stolen from an army camp near Grik in Perak state. Fifteen men dressed in military uniforms persuaded sentries to let them into the camp and seized more than one hundred M16 and Steyr AUG rifles, machine guns, grenade launchers, mortar shells and thousands of rounds of ammunition.²² After a five-day standoff, during which two hostages were killed, the group surrendered. The Malaysian government quickly laid the blame for the raid at the door of a religious cult known as *Al Ma'unah* ('Brotherhood of Inner Power') but an investigation also implicated several Malaysian army soldiers sympathetic to the group.²³

While the Grik incident grabbed the headlines, the robbery was not unprecedented. Four Steyr AUG automatic rifles were stolen from another army camp in Kamaunting, Perak in July 1999.²⁴ These weapons ended up in the hands of a gang of bandits which the press quickly tagged 'the Steyr Gang'. The group carried out a number of armed robberies on banks and finance companies, before four members were shot dead by police and the weapons were recovered.²⁵ Several group members, including the alleged mastermind, were proven to have links to the Malaysian Army.²⁶

Sales of surplus weapons

While leakage is the principal source for illegal arms transfers to rebel groups fighting throughout Southeast Asia, there is also a large and well-organised

commercially motivated trade in illicit weapons. A network of brokers and arms dealers in Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia and Thailand play an important role in the organisation and movement of arms shipments to a wide range of clients. Unsurprisingly, the main smuggling routes in the region are closely linked to ongoing areas of conflict, particularly Sri Lanka, Aceh, the Southern Philippines, as well as Northeastern Indian states and the various Burmese insurgents fighting along the Thai and Bangladesh borders.

The most important source of weapons for the region's many intra-state conflicts is Indochina, particularly Cambodia. Vietnam and Laos are important transit states for weapons from southern China, and Thailand has become an important centre for the illegal brokering and 'facilitation' of small arms transfers, but Cambodia is especially important as a supplier. The vast number of weapons remaining there after the civil war means it acts as a kind of weapons supermarket for arms dealers and brokers searching for low cost military hardware. These individuals are aided in their business by corrupt officials and military personnel, both in Cambodia and across the border in Thailand. Once illegal weapons enter Thailand, they can be supplied to domestic criminal actors, or shipped by sea or over land to markets in Burma, Sri Lanka, or Indonesia. According to one writer, these kind of dealers fall into two camps. First, there are the small time operators who often work alone, buying weapons in Cambodia and reselling them in Bangkok to gangs, Burmese rebels or even to criminal organisations in Taiwan and Hong Kong.²⁷ These sales are not insignificant but represent the 'tip of the iceberg of illicit arms sales'.²⁸ The second kind of transaction, the most lucrative, are large transfers of conventional arms from Cambodia, southern China and Vietnam smuggled with the tacit permission and sometimes active participation of Cambodian and Thai military personnel and politicians. These include everything from assault rifles to surface to air missiles.²⁹ Many of the weapons leave Cambodia via southern ports such as Kompong Som (Sihanoukville) and move along the coastline, island hopping to Rayong and Pattaya in the Gulf of Thailand. One senior Thai military officer has estimated that 80 per cent of the weapons smuggled out of Cambodia move by sea.³⁰

These larger weapons consignments are usually destined for organised insurgents and not criminal gangs. They have reached a number of regional rebel forces, including the Tamil Tigers (LTTE), Burmese and Lao rebels and organisations operating in India's northeastern states.³¹ Burmese rebels like the Shan State Army (SSA) and Karen National Union (KNU) are supplied by land through Thailand, with the porous Thai-Cambodian and Thai-Myanmar borders making these transfers relatively easy to accomplish.³² Thai military officials have been implicated in the shipment of weapons and ammunition to the border, and corrupt individual soldiers are known to play a role in the movement of weapons to the rebels. In August 1998 a Royal Thai military officer was arrested in Bangkok when police found 600,000 rounds of Czech ammunition and an M16 in his home.³³

According to intelligence sources, the most important areas of activity for arms smugglers using sea routes are islands off the coast of Phuket, as well as the southern provinces of Ranong and Satun.³⁴ Cambodian-sourced weapons destined for the Tamil Tigers are shipped from weapons depots near Phuket on trawlers and are transferred to speedboats off the coast of Sri Lanka.³⁵ With more than 10,000 vessels fishing Thai waters and a large number of small islands where weapons can be transshipped, effective interdiction is extremely difficult.³⁶ The complicity of the Burmese military in smuggling operations also impedes law enforcement efforts. At one time the LTTE occupied a base on Twante Island in Myanmar through an understanding with several generals in Yangon.³⁷ The *Tatmadaw* has also been linked in reports to the Moyaza pirate group, which has been implicated in small arms smuggling to Sri Lanka.³⁸

The scale of this trade is difficult to quantify, but seizures alone suggest very large numbers of weapons are being moved. In one incident in March 1999, an armed trawler carrying an estimated \$10 million worth of weapons destined for the LTTE was sunk in a joint operation between the Indian and Sri Lankan navies.³⁹ In February and May of 1998, two fishing vessels carrying 146 and 45 machine guns respectively were impounded by Thai authorities. A subsequent investigation revealed that the boats were linked to the LTTE.⁴⁰ In March 1997, the Thai Navy seized a ship reportedly destined for Sri Lankan waters carrying M16s, mortar tubes, M79 ammunition, RPGs, 7.62mm and 5.56mm ammunition, anti-tank rockets and chemicals for bomb production.⁴¹ In March 1996 Bangladeshi authorities seized 600 assault rifles and a large quantity of explosives on a trawler off Cox's Bazaar.

The second major pipeline for Cambodian weapons is through southern Thailand, and from there across the Strait of Malacca to Aceh. According to an Indonesian magazine's investigative report on the *Aceh Merdeka* movement, the group is largely armed with Chinese-made replicas of Soviet weapons and M16-A1s.⁴² These are believed to have come from two sources: the Indonesian military and smugglers moving weapons from Indochina. Informed sources identify Penang, with its large Acehnese population, as an important transit point in the process. According to officials based in Aceh, weapons are transported across the Straits of Malacca in small boats, often being retransferred again at sea, before reaching their final destinations in Sumatra in places like Lhokseumawe, Padang, Tanjung Balai and Peureulak.⁴³ The size of the boats used makes interdiction at sea by Malaysian or Indonesian naval and marine forces extremely difficult.

In addition to Cambodia, large numbers of illegal weapons are smuggled out of the Philippines to various purchasers. A major problem is controlling illegal production in the south of the country, particularly in Danao City and Mandaue City in Cebu, where there are more than 3000 gunsmiths at work.⁴⁴ In addition to Danao's two major licensed arms makers, there are many illegal or quasi-legal producers manufacturing '*paltik*' or homemade weapons. While

many *paltik* weapons are literally hand-made — often crafted from pipes, steel bars, even old car parts — there is growing evidence that some producers are now making high quality, made-to-order military-style small arms as well.⁴⁵ Buyers for Filipino weapons include local crime organisations and rebels, as well as Taiwanese and Japanese crime syndicates.⁴⁶ In what is a highly organised process, agents collect finished products from a variety of small producers and consolidate the weapons on pre-designated *bodegas* for shipment to Japan. Important exit points include Batangas, Ilocos Sur and other northern parts of the country.⁴⁷ In the southern Philippines, gunrunners are especially active in Agusan, Misamis, Surigao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawitwai and Zamboanga provinces.⁴⁸

There are also reports that Filipino weapons have been smuggled to Muslim forces in the Maluku. In January 2000, the Indonesian newspaper *Suara Merdeka* reported claims that a helicopter had airlifted a shipment of weapons from Davao island in the Philippines to Ambon with the tacit approval of the TNI. No evidence was provided to support this allegation, which was strongly denied by the Indonesian military.⁴⁹ Perhaps more representative of the scale of the smuggling was the Indonesian Navy's interception of what was described as a 'traditional vessel' from the Philippines in January 2001. The vessel was apparently destined for the Maluku carrying six guns and 454 bullets. The guns were World War II vintage.⁵⁰

Extra-regional suppliers

Extra-regional suppliers provided most of the weapons used in conflicts in Southeast Asia during the Cold War. China, Thailand and Singapore and the US all supplied (or trans-shipped) weapons to the opposition factions fighting in Cambodia, and the US also funded and supplied anti-government forces in Laos until the mid-1980s. The Soviet Union likewise provided huge quantities of cheap arms to its regional allies in Vietnam and Phnom Penh. While these geopolitical rationales largely disappeared with the end of the Cold War, at least one set of international ideological linkages remains important today: Islamic fundamentalism.

In the past there have been persistent reports connecting groups in Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, Sudan and Libya to Islamic insurgent groups in the Southern Philippines and Aceh.⁵¹ Members of the Abu Sayyaf and the *Aceh Merdeka* movements, who were trained in Libya and Tripoli, reportedly facilitated the transfer of large numbers of Pakistani-made HK33s and MP5s to the MILF in the southern Philippines.⁵² More recently, the Saudi terrorist Osama Bin Laden has also been linked to Filipino rebels, including the MILF and Abu Sayyaf. Bin Laden's brother-in-law, Mohammed Jamal Kalifa, lived in the country for several years and was active in establishing welfare organisations which are alleged to have transferred funds to radical groups. According to a former member of Abu Sayyaf, the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO) is

one important conduit for channeling funds from Bin Laden to Abu Sayyaf. A Philippines government intelligence report stated that the IIRO is 'utilised by foreign extremists as a pipeline through which funding for the local extremists are being coursed through (sic)'.⁵³

While states such as Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Iran are also frequently mentioned in discussions of state-sponsored terrorism, other actors in the region have also been involved in politically-motivated transfers of weapons to insurgents and non-state actors fighting within Southeast Asia. While sending arms to rebels in neighbouring states has declined since the Cold War, it has not disappeared entirely. The Thai and Myanmar governments have traded accusations that the other is involved in actively supporting various rebel factions along their border. Thailand has even admitted that it is supporting sabotage operations against the United Wa State Army inside Burmese territory. Malaysia continues to be accused of tacitly permitting the shipment of arms to Aceh and the southern Philippines.⁵⁴ The extent of official involvement in those cases is difficult to gauge, but in one recent example involving extra-regional transfers, the motivations and risks associated with grey market arms shipments are clearly illustrated.

Grey market transfers

In February and May 1998 India's armed forces and coast guard carried out two operations against gun running activities off the Andaman and Nicobar islands. Operations 'Leech' and 'Poorab' were ostensibly aimed against Thai, Cambodian and Burmese arms smugglers believed to be shipping weapons to insurgents in Northeast India, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.⁵⁵ The joint operation was a major success, with the interception of several boatloads of arms. A gun battle on Landfall Island during the February operation left six smugglers dead, 74 arrested and a large quantity of small arms and light weapons seized by the Indian Navy. In late May, navy and coast guard vessels intercepted another two trawlers off Port Blair en route to the Burma-Bangladesh border. Upon sighting the ships, the trawlers were scuttled and their Thai crews jumped overboard. As well as arms, ammunition and explosives, the boats were carrying 50 kilograms of heroin from Burma.⁵⁶

What appeared to be a very successful anti-smuggling operation soon began to get more complicated, however, when Indian Defence Secretary Ajit Kumar issued instructions to the military to exercise the 'utmost restraint' in pursuing combined operations in the area in the future.⁵⁷ Kumar told the three service chiefs that if they received any military intelligence about arms trafficking through the Andaman Sea to Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh, they should take no 'precipitate action' without at least first getting government permission. The instructions provoked outrage from the chiefs and were ultimately withdrawn, but in the controversy that followed, a quite different picture of the smuggling operations began to emerge.

During an investigation by the Central Bureau of Intelligence (CBI) it became apparent that the weapons seized by the navy were actually purchased in Cambodia with the connivance of India's external security service, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). They were part of a series of shipments, some of which had previously come through the Thai port of Ranong to be landed on Wyakaung Beach between Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh and Burma's Arakan province. The weapons were destined for Burmese rebels in Arakan and Chin Province. They were part of a secret Indian operation to support the rebels in an attempt to offset growing Chinese influence on the military regime in Yangon. In a cold display of *realpolitik*, the arms transfers were in fact part of a dual-track approach in which India was also offering assault rifles, electronic warfare equipment, radar and communications technology to the Burmese government.⁵⁸

Intelligence officials said some of the intercepted arms were intended to go to rebel groups whose help they wanted in preventing the transfer of weapons to Indian insurgent groups like the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and the People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA). But news of the transfers infuriated the Indian army, which argued that a large proportion of these very weapons were finding their way back across the border to the very separatist groups they were fighting.⁵⁹ The Burmese rebels were believed to be selling surplus weapons to the Indian secessionists.

A challenge for weak states

Adding to the problems of a demand for small arms and a plentiful supply is the fact that many ASEAN members are weak states. They lack the capacity to perform many of the most basic tasks necessary to secure their borders and prevent illicit arms transfers. Thanks to the vagaries of post-colonial boundary setting, the political geography of Southeast Asia would make this a challenge for even the best resourced governments. The financially strapped Indonesian government, for example, is responsible for policing close to 17,000 islands that stretch across an area equal to one-sixth of the equator. Burma and Thailand share a 2,500 km long border, much of which is thick jungle, isolated from major towns or roads. The frontiers between Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos are often poorly marked and in some cases, formal border demarcation is still taking place. The border region between Indonesian Irian Jaya (West Papua) and Papua New Guinea is some of the least accessible territory anywhere in the world.

Likewise the maritime borders between East Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia are also unclear and in some senses, highly artificial. These geographic factors are complicated by people who have traditionally lived and worked on both sides of the border. For example, fishermen off the coast of Sabah frequently armed to protect themselves against pirates, come and go

between Malaysia and the Philippines with little regard for immigration formalities. Even where there are clearer maritime boundaries, for a state like Thailand to police the 10,000 fishing vessels that work its waters each year is difficult to say the least.

Refugees and illegal immigrants further complicate matters. There are in excess of 250,000 illegal Filipino immigrants living in Sabah and the Thai-Burma border also has a large number of refugee camps for people who have fled the conflict inside Myanmar. Likewise, there is a sizeable number of Lao refugees in northeastern Thailand. For many, a trip across the Mekong to Laos is a regular occurrence, not something that requires official sanction. In such conditions, refugees are often able to move back and forth between states, in some cases moving arms or supplies with them.

Weak states also lack strong institutions, and the lack of professionalism among some regional customs, military and law enforcement personnel is another important component of the regional trade in illicit small arms. Some states simply have no idea about how many arms are legally held in their national inventories. If records are kept at all, they are often incomplete or out of date and bear no resemblance to the actual weapons stored in armouries and depots. Police and military personnel find it easy to sign weapons out, and often take them home for personal protection or use. Once outside the armoury, the possibility of theft, loss or the illegal sale of the weapon becomes much greater. Low wages also help fuel corruption and facilitate the movement of arms. This is especially so in Cambodia, but in most ASEAN states there are clear instances where military and police officials have been implicated in the theft or sale of weapons.

Even where law enforcement and security personnel are committed to seizing smuggled arms and supported by their governments, they are often under-equipped to meet the challenge. The sheer size of Indonesian territorial waters means its comparatively small navy and marine corps can never hope to organise more than selective blockades around areas of conflict. The dispatch of 4000 marines and naval units to Aceh in 2000 did little to stop the flow of weapons into the province. In 2001, financial constraints forced the scaling back of an exercise by the Indonesian navy's Eastern Fleet designed to interdict weapons smuggling to Ambon and Irian Jaya.⁶⁰

Conclusion

The above analysis suggests that the challenge posed by illicit small arms in Southeast Asia is extraordinarily complex. First, the sources of illicit arms are diverse, both in terms of states and sources within states. Cambodia is one of the biggest suppliers of small arms to insurgent groups and terrorists, but large quantities also move from China, Vietnam and Myanmar, as well as states outside the region. Singapore and Thailand are important transit points in the brokering and movement of small arms.

The most important single source within states is leakage: from individual soldiers, state arsenals and military holdings. The scale of leakage differs around the region, but it occurs in some form in almost every ASEAN state. Illegal production and the diversion of legal transfers are other sources, although generally speaking, an analysis of illicit trafficking in ASEAN seems to confirm Krause's argument that most weapons involved in these transfers are recycled rather than new.

Second, while the arms themselves are also varied, a core group of weapons involved in illegal transfers can be identified. These reflect both the demands of insurgent groups and criminals, as well as the most commonly available arms. The most common items are rifles, particularly variants of the Soviet AK47 assault rifle like the Chinese Type 56. American M16s and AR15s are also ubiquitous, along with older Soviet weapons like the SKS, and World War II era American M1s and carbines, and M14 automatics. Light machine guns and grenade launchers like the American M203 and M79 are also common.

Perhaps the least well understood area of the illicit arms trade in Southeast Asia concerns transfers of ammunition. Unlike simple small arms, reliable military ammunition cannot be easily made by non-state actors. Mass production cannot be done in primitive factories, but requires raw materials, sophisticated industrial equipment and particular environmental conditions. Fighting forces need large quantities of ammunition and while leakage represents one obvious source, it seems unlikely that theft and small scale sales meet all of the demand. Presumably therefore some states and private producers are making large quantities of ammunition that are passing directly into unauthorised hands, although quite how this occurs is not clear. It does, however, present one possible avenue for international control, a matter that will be discussed in the final chapter.

Third, a wide variety of actors is involved in the buying, selling, brokering and transportation of illegal small arms. They range from small time operators who buy and sell just a few weapons, to professional arms dealers and brokers, to corrupt police, security and military personnel as well as the intelligence agencies who mastermind 'grey market' transfers to non-state actors. Consumers of illicit small arms likewise range from individual criminals, to crime syndicates, to private armies and assorted terrorist and insurgent groups. The motivations behind these transfers are equally complex. They include financial gain and political objectives, but there is often no simple way to distinguish between them.

Finally, the methods and routes used by smugglers, while patterned, often involve territory that is extremely difficult for states to secure. This is a problem exacerbated by a lack of state capacity on the part of most ASEAN's members. It also highlights the need for broad and substantive regional cooperation if the challenge presented by illicit small arms transfers is to be met.

ASEAN Country Studies

Brunei-Darussalam

Interviews with officials from the Brunei Ministry of Foreign Affairs in February 2001 confirmed that Brunei-Darussalam does not produce its own small arms or ammunition.¹ Brunei's defence needs are instead met through its close relationship with the United Kingdom and other external suppliers. According to figures released as part of the US State Department's program of transparency on arms shipments, between 1990 and 1999 the US exported 2082 military rifles to Brunei as well as 30 unspecified machine guns.²

Brunei's armed forces are equipped with a number of widely used military small arms. These include: the Belgian 9mm FN 35 pistol; 7.62mm Heckler and Koch G3 and the 5.56mm M16A1 assault rifles; 9mm Sterling and 5.56mm Colt XM177 sub-machine guns; a heavy-barrelled M16A1 light machine gun; HK21A1, FN MAG and SIG 710-3 heavy machine guns; and US M203 40mm grenade launchers.³ The M16A1 rifle is considered to be near the end of its life-span and it seems likely the Royal Brunei Armed Forces will seek to upgrade its infantry weapons at some stage in the future.

While Brunei does not have any kind of small arms or ammunition production capability, it has financed the movement of small arms and light weapons in the past decade. Most notably, it was widely reported that the Sultanate helped bankroll the purchase and delivery of several shipments of small arms to Bosnian Muslim forces during the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. Brunei's funds (along with those from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iran, Sudan, Malaysia, and Turkey) were handled through the Austrian bank accounts of a group called the Third World Relief Agency.⁴ One of the earliest reported transfers involved 120 tons of assault rifles, ammunition and mortars shipped from Sudan to Bosnia via Slovenia in 1993.⁵ Iran and Turkey were apparently the transit points in another deal, which reportedly also had support and assistance from the Malaysian government and tacit approval from the United States.⁶

Cambodia

A vast number of military small arms continue to circulate in Cambodia. Most are left over from the civil war and were originally supplied by a wide range of countries. Since the end of the civil war Cambodia has gone from being a net recipient of arms to the biggest supplier of surplus small arms to the region. Cambodian arms have been smuggled to Thailand, Indonesia, Burma, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and other states. Despite exporting many of these weapons, gun violence and crime remains a major problem in Cambodian society.

History

During the Cold War vast numbers of small arms from the United States, China, Cuba, the former Czechoslovakia, France, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam and the Soviet Union poured into Cambodia. It is impossible to quantify just how many weapons were transferred to the various military factions (including the Khmer Rouge) but statistics compiled by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1993 estimated that the opposition factions alone possessed 320,443 light weapons and 80.7 million rounds of ammunition.⁷ According to a report by one Cambodian NGO, even that number was too low, as it represented fewer than one weapon per opposition soldier.⁸ A 1994 government survey estimated that there were 900,000 unregistered guns in the hands of the population.⁹ Another survey of 15,000 Phnom Penh homes in December 1998 found two out of three admitting to owning a weapon.¹⁰ Analysts in Phnom Penh admit that all these numbers are largely educated guesses, but the general consensus is that today there are somewhere between 500,000 and one million military small arms circulating in Cambodia.¹¹

Not surprisingly, weapons and ammunition are generally cheap and easy to obtain, although prices and availability vary between different parts of the country. A 1998 study on weapons control issues carried out in seven Cambodian provinces concluded that military weapons were available almost everywhere. In the country's only organised weapons market, the Tuk Thla market in Phnom Penh, AK47s and M16 assault rifles sold for between \$40 and \$120, K-59 handguns for \$200-\$350, K-54s for \$180-\$300.¹² Hand grenades— an oft-used weapon in Cambodia – went for just \$5.¹³ When one researcher working for the local NGO Working Group for Weapons Reduction (WGWR) approached the market in 1998, he was told 'everything lighter than a tank' was available for purchase.¹⁴ According to WGWR Tuk Thla was actually one of the more expensive places in the country to buy weapons.¹⁵ Elsewhere in Cambodia, an AK47 could be had for as little as \$5 and in some cases bartered for food or small consumer goods like radios.¹⁶ B40 rocket launchers (with 4 rockets) sold for as little as \$32.

Production

Given the fact that the country is already awash with guns and ammunition, there would appear to be no need for the Cambodian government to be involved in any weapons production. Despite this, there have been reports that Cambodia has a limited small arms production capability. Forecast International's *Ordnance and Munitions Forecast* claims there is a state arms factory located at Strung Chral outside Phnom Penh, and that it was established with assistance from what was then Czechoslovakia. It says the factory produces 9mm pistols and ammunition, although the 'current manufacturing effort is very low and solely to meet domestic demand.'¹⁷ Extensive interviews in

Cambodia in February 2001 cast doubt on this claim. Senior Cambodian military officers and Interior Ministry officials categorically deny that the Kingdom of Cambodia produces either small arms or ammunition.¹⁸ They claim there is no military requirement for additional weapons and point out that the military still has large stockpiles should it need them. It appears that the factory referred to may have been in operation during the 1980s, but no longer exists. Likewise, there were reports that Cambodia had entered into an agreement with North Korea in March 1994 for the construction of a factory for the production of ammunition and to repair tanks and small arms.¹⁹ According to *Jane's World Armies*, this agreement was subsequently canceled to avoid causing offence to Western military aid donors.²⁰

One recent development, however, suggests Cambodia might be implicated in the production of weapons in the future, albeit indirectly. According to informed sources, a Chinese enterprise called Flour Company has set up an operation in Strung Treng province near the Cambodia-Lao border, growing Mai Sek trees which will be used to produce rifle butts.²¹ The company was granted 7000 hectares of land for the purpose, and the enterprise is designed to provide employment for up to 800 families. Land has been cleared for planting, but there has not yet been any harvesting of trees, processing or production. The final destination for the butts is presumed to be China (via Laos) and although the road covering the 10-15km to the Lao border is currently in poor repair, the company apparently has plans to rebuild it. It is possible that the agreement was arranged at the provincial level, perhaps without the knowledge of officials in Phnom Penh.

Military inventory

With no domestic manufacturing capacity, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) relies exclusively on the large number of weapons acquired from a variety of sources during the civil war. Current RCAF stocks include a mix of Soviet, Chinese, American and European arms, some of which came from licensed producers in Southeast Asia. The inventory includes: 9mm FN 35 and 7.62mm Tokarev pistols; 9mm vz/23 and 25 submachine guns; 5.56mm M16A1, 7.62mm FN FAL, AK47/Type 56, AKM and SVS assault rifles; and 7.62mm M60, RPD and Type 59 machine guns. While sources do not list close support weapons, these are likely to include some American M203 and M79 grenade launchers.²² Cambodia has obtained ammunition from a number of sources, including states in Eastern Europe. In the late 1990s the Ukraine supplied Cambodia with 10 million 7.62mm cartridges produced in the Luhans'k machine-building plant.²³ The factory's past production has been geared towards sub-machine gun and pistol ammunition.

Domestic weapons problems

On 30 April 1999 the Cambodian Ministry of the Interior passed sub-decree 38, which made the possession of military arms illegal for civilians. The

legislation was followed by a crackdown, particularly in and around Phnom Penh, where roadblocks were used to stop and search people for weapons. Cash rewards were also used for anyone turning in guns or explosives to commune or district authorities.²⁴ Since then, authorities have confiscated or collected 107,869 small arms (including 15,000 pieces collected from the defence forces).²⁵ Of these 36,505 have been broken down and destroyed.²⁶ A European Union-sponsored program, Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia (EU-ASAC), has also destroyed several hundred weapons in public burning ceremonies and has plans to destroy more surplus arms.²⁷ According to press reports, most of the weapons destroyed in these confiscation programs were AK47s, AR-15s, M16s, SKS rifles, carbines and SKs.²⁸ A large number of grenades, M-79 shells, B40 rockets, and 60mm mortar ammunition have also been collected.²⁹

In addition, EU-ASAC is running two pilot projects aimed at collecting weapons from civilians in Bakan district in Pursat province and in Snuol district in Kracheh province. These are based on a 'weapons for development' formula, in which weapons are handed in exchange for a specific development initiative such as the building of a school, medical facilities or a road. The projects are supported by the Cambodian government, EU-ASAC and the United Nations' World Food Program, as well as by bilateral aid donors such as Japan, the Netherlands and Germany.³⁰

Although the confiscation of weapons is a positive step towards reducing the level of armament in Cambodian society, not all the surplus and illegal weapons collected have been destroyed. Many remain in storage awaiting destruction and some have been earmarked for the future use of the RCAF. EU-ASAC has documented the poor quality of storage facilities for the thousands of confiscated weapons housed throughout the country. According to Brigadier-General Henny van der Graf, the EU-ASAC project manager, 'great numbers of weapons and ammunition [are] stored in wooden sheds and barracks without any registration and safety regulations. Some have been stored by the army, others are piled up inside police stations. It is very easy for criminals to access these weapons and explosives and to bring large quantities of these on to the black market without any chance that the theft will be noticed.'³¹

The problem is not simply limited to weapons held in national holdings or storage. In some parts of the country, soldiers serving on active duty also keep their weapons in insecure conditions. One writer described coming across a scene at Phumi Kampong Sralau on the Cambodian-Lao border, where a soldier was sitting in a small border shack with no fewer than nine assault rifles (eight AK47s and an M16) propped up in a corner. The owners of the weapons were nowhere to be seen, but were presumed to be in a barracks, located some distance away across a river.³²

Not surprisingly, leakage remains an enormous problem in Cambodia. One of the biggest reasons is endemic corruption among security and law enforcement officials. Several sources in Phnom Penh claimed that off-duty members of the police and gendarmerie are behind many of the robberies that take place.³³ Fear of the police and the military also provides people with a reason to retain weapons.³⁴ Corruption has also directly impeded the collection process. Some sources suggested the police simply return or sell confiscated weapons to criminals, as they want to protect the illegal enterprises from which they make extra income. Even the government admits that corrupt elements in the armed forces and police are directly supplying weapons to criminal gangs and arms dealers.³⁵ As an average Cambodian police officer earns only \$10-15 a month, it is not surprising that corruption is rife.

Despite the passing of sub-decree 38 and the confiscation of some 100,000 weapons, small arms continue to circulate and cause serious social problems throughout the country. In December 2000 the government published an announcement noting that 'a majority' of civilian ministries and institutions had not observed sub-decree 38 and called on them to surrender their arms and explosives.³⁶ A cursory flick through *The Phnom Penh Post's* 'Police Blotter' section in any given week also reveals the large number of crimes committed with military-style weapons. In one week in February 2001, the *Post* reported three attacks in the capital carried out with K-59 handguns, three shootings with AK47 assault rifles, one with a K-54 handgun, another with an unidentified handgun, a grenade attack that resulted from a drunken quarrel, and the death of four people when the H107 artillery shell they were hammering exploded.³⁷ One report claims that Phnom Penh's armed robbery rate is four times higher than that of Bangkok, and has the highest number of armed robberies and murders in Southeast Asia.³⁸ Another estimate is that three Cambodians die a violent death at the hands of military weapons every day.³⁹

The question of weapons circulating within Cambodia caused fresh headlines in November 2000 when a large group of anti-government rebels attacked state offices in Phnom Penh.⁴⁰ Between 60 and 70 men armed with AK47s, B40 RPGs and hand grenades arrived at the city's train station at 1.30am local time and attacked the Ministry of Defence and Cabinet buildings. Fifteen kilometres west of the city another group launched a simultaneous attack on a military barracks. Both groups were repelled after lengthy gun battles with security forces during which seven rebels were killed and eleven police and soldiers wounded. Government spokesmen accused a group called the Cambodian Freedom Fighters (CFF) (also known as the *Free Khmer*) of being behind the attack. An American citizen, Richard Kiri Kim, was arrested and charged with planning the violence.⁴¹ Opposition leader Sam Rainsy accused the government of being the real force behind the attack, saying they had orchestrated the attack to divert attention from the country's economic and political problems. Diplomats in Phnom Penh dismiss this claim, and generally support the

government's interpretation of events. According to one ASEAN diplomat, Cambodian groups based in California provided the funding for the weapons and manpower.⁴²

The criminalisation of weapons possession since April 1999 has had some effect on the circulation of weapons. Armed people are no longer seen on the streets of Phnom Penh and local residents say there are fewer weapons in private homes.⁴³ The Tuk Thla market which used to openly display military hardware, now only openly sells uniforms and equipment. A complete range of military products is still available, but would-be buyers need to discretely contact vendors who take them to warehouses where weapons are available for inspection and purchase. According to various sources in Phnom Penh, corrupt Cambodian military personnel are still the largest suppliers of illegal weapons, and most of the guns sold through Tuk Thla come from military warehouses.⁴⁴

The extent to which there has been any change in Cambodia's culture of violence remains debatable. Some local people and government officials claim that possession of weapons is increasingly stigmatised and looked down upon. According to WGWR, however, weapons remain a potent symbol of prestige and power in Cambodian society. Says Neb Sinthay, 'people continue to use weapons as the first solution to solve their problems. This is true even for minor disputes, which often turn deadly'.⁴⁵ The extent to which a military culture has infused itself into everyday life is reflected in the fact that guesthouses in Phnom Penh run tours in which backpackers can fire off a clip of ammunition from an AK47 for about \$10.⁴⁶ Press reports even refer to ranges where visitors can throw hand grenades or fire a B40 rocket — for a price.⁴⁷ Another measure of the ongoing power of the gun is that senior government officials continue to have heavily armed body guards and their family members also frequently carry personal weapons. In March 2001, the daughter of Interior Ministry Secretary of State Em Sam An was caught with a handgun in her bag at Singapore's Changi airport. She was detained and the weapon was confiscated. She was eventually released after being given a life ban on travel to the city state. The incident was particularly embarrassing for Em Sam An as he is the deputy president of the Cambodian government's gun control committee.⁴⁸

Transfers

Since the end of the civil war, Cambodia has gone from being a major importer of weapons to being the largest supplier of used small arms to various insurgent and terrorist forces in the Southeast Asia. Whereas Thailand was previously a vital link in the supply of weapons to the Khmer Rouge and other opposition factions, Thai criminals and corrupt officials now play a key role in moving arms out of Cambodia and transporting them to zones of conflict in Southeast Asia and beyond. These transfers are not sanctioned officially by the Cambodian government, but high level government officials, politicians and military personnel have been implicated in black market sales.

An outline of the trade can be gleaned from consignments of weapons intercepted by regional law enforcement officials, although as with narcotics, seizures probably represent just the tip of the iceberg. According to reports, during the 1990s the arms trade out of Cambodia involved both small-scale purchases and large commercial-sized shipments. In the first kind of transfer, arms dealers from Thailand, often acting on their own, would buy small numbers of arms from Khmer Rouge or RCAF troops at the Thai-Cambodian border. These were then sold to criminal gangs in Bangkok, Burmese rebels or were sometimes re-exported to gangs in Hong Kong or Taiwan.⁴⁹ With the end of the civil war and the collapse of the Khmer Rouge, these transfers appear to have declined.

The second and more lucrative kind of transaction involves large transfers of conventional arms from Cambodia. While some of these came from Khmer Rouge stocks during the early part of the 1990s, today they are generally assumed to come from RCAF arms depots and warehouses. The smuggling occurs with the tacit permission and often active participation of Cambodian and Thai military personnel and politicians and the arms include everything from assault rifles to surface-to-air missiles.⁵⁰ Consignments are often purchased by insurgent groups using brokers or front companies based in Thailand and Phnom Penh. For example, the Tamil Tigers have used front companies like restaurants and vehicle-repair shops in Phnom Penh.⁵¹ Other groups base themselves just across the border in Thailand.⁵²

According to a senior Thai military officer 80 per cent of the weapons smuggled out of Cambodia move by sea.⁵³ Many of these weapons leave via southern ports such as Kompong Som (Sihanoukville). From there they move along the coastline to Rayong and Pattaya in the Gulf of Thailand. Once in Thailand weapons are then re-shipped by sea to groups like the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) and Burmese opposition forces in the Arakan and Chin states.⁵⁴ Much of the traffic to the LTTE is directed from islands near Phuket, and Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh is often mentioned as a transit point.⁵⁵ During a May 1999 visit, the Sri Lankan foreign minister, Lakshamn Kadirgamar, raised the issue of transfers to the LTTE with Cambodian authorities. The government apparently promised Sri Lanka that it would take action to prevent black market sales.⁵⁶ A second major route by sea is through southern Thailand, and across the Straits of Malacca to Aceh. These routes are discussed in more detail in the Thailand and Indonesia country studies.

As well as moving by sea, Cambodian weapons have also been supplied over land through Thailand to Burmese rebels such as the Karen National Union (KNU) and Shan State Army (SSA). According to one account, 'the routes for transporting arms from the Thai-Cambodian border to the Burmese minority forces stayed fairly constant from the 1980s onwards'.⁵⁷ Weapons that crossed the border in the lower northeast of Thailand (Ubon Ratchathani, Sisaket, Surin and Buriram) were stored in Korat and then forwarded to the

Karen, Mon and Mong Thai Army rebels.⁵⁸ Supplies delivered through eastern provinces of Aranyaprathet, Prachinburi, Trat and Chanthaburi were moved through Chonburi and Bangkok.⁵⁹ Larger shipments sometimes went by boat to Prachaub Khiri Khan and then overland to Karen rebels in Amphur Saiyok, Kanchanaburi, or to Mon forces across the border from Sangkhla district.⁶⁰

In the early and middle of the 1990s, Sa Kaew district seems to have played a central role in this smuggling. In 1994, Thai border policemen apprehended two Thais dressed in military uniforms driving a truck loaded with arms. They admitted that Cambodian soldiers in Sa Kaew had provided and loaded the arms and said they were taking the weapons from the Cambodian border to the northeast of Thailand en route to Burma. In 1995 Thai police arrested two soldiers and a civilian transporting 'war weapons' in Mae Hong Son, on the Burma border. They said the arms had come from Ka Saew and admitted that they had made the trip several times before.⁶¹ It is also believed that SA-7 surface-to-air missiles obtained by the former Burmese drug baron Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army (MTA) came from Sa Kaew.

Indonesia

Indonesia's small arms sector is dominated by a single government-owned company, Pindad PT (Persero). Pindad produces a range of small arms, light weapons and ammunition, mostly for the Indonesian government, although there have been some exports. Legal gun ownership is not common in Indonesia and, although in practice anyone with money or influence can get a weapon, gun violence is not generally a problem in the major cities. There is a serious problem with illegal small arms in the country's many conflict regions, particularly Aceh, Maluku, Timor and increasingly West Papua/Irian Jaya.

Military holdings

The Indonesian military has imported and produced a significant number of weapons in the past, and its holdings are diverse. At the time of independence, the country had a wide variety of infantry weapons, including 7.7mm Japanese, 6.5mm Dutch, the American M1 and British Lee-Enfield rifles. During the 1950s, the United States supplied an additional 69,816 M1 rifles as aid, along with 21,000 M1 carbines. A further 5,000 rifles were transferred in commercial sales. In the early 1960s the Indonesian government decided to adopt the Beretta BM-59, the Italian version of the M1 Garand, as the standard infantry weapon.⁶² A shipment of these weapons was purchased from Beretta and licensed production later took place. Other acquisitions included the Model 38/49 sub-machine gun, the Swedish Model 45 Carl Gustav sub-machine gun, the French SG540 rifle, the Finnish version of the Kalashnikov AK47 - the Valmet M76, the Heckler and Koch G3, the Czech vz. 52/57 rifle, and the Belgian FN FAL.⁶³

In 1962, American AR-15 rifles were added to the mix and issued to Indonesian commando units. Infantry forces still used the BM59, but also increasingly armed themselves with Soviet AK47 and SKS rifles. Ammunition for the AR-15 was purchased from the United States through commercial channels. The US State Department lists exports of cartridges up to 20mm for 1975-1980 as totaling 4,914,000 rounds. Other ammunition purchases were made from Singapore and Europe prior to the development of an indigenous production capacity (see below).⁶⁴

During the 1970s, the Indonesian government decided to import the M16A1 (Model 613) as a replacement for the AR15. Initial transfers were made as grant aid under the US Military Assistance Program (MAP) and an estimated 63,449 rifles were transferred to Indonesia in aid and through commercial sales. In 1990, this already eclectic inventory was augmented with an unknown (but probably small) number of Steyr AUG assault rifles. Some of these may have been provided by Australian Defence Industries.⁶⁵ The AUGs continue in service today and were implicated in the shootings of students at Trisakti University in 1998 that led to massive riots in Jakarta.⁶⁶ In 1997 there were also reports of Indonesian interest in Russian small arms, but nothing appears to have come of these contacts.⁶⁷

More recently, Indonesia has imported a number of Heckler and Koch weapons, including the MP5 sub-machine gun, a weapon popular among police and special-forces units around the world. British Aerospace (which owns H&K) admitted that MP5s manufactured at its factory in Nottingham were supplied to Jakarta in 1996. In July 1998, the Turkish News Agency reported that MKEK, the Turkish subsidiary of Heckler and Koch, had contracted to sell \$400,000 worth of sub-machine guns to the Indonesian police. A British documentary also reported that MKEK had sold 500 MP5s to Indonesia in September 1999, at the height of the violence in East Timor.⁶⁸ Arranging the sale through the Turkish subsidiary allowed H&K to circumvent a British embargo on arms sales to Indonesia.

Domestic production

While many of Indonesia's military small arms needs have historically been met through imports, it now has a well developed production capacity of its own. The Indonesian small arms sector is dominated by a single, government-owned company, Pindad PT. The company's origins date back to the Dutch colonial period, when arms were produced first by the weapons workshop *Artillerie Constructie Winkel* (AWC) and later the Bandung-based *Artillerie Inrichtingen* (AI). AI passed into Indonesian control with independence, and was renamed *Pabrik Senjata dan Mesin* (PSM) or *Armament and Munition Factory*.⁶⁹ In 1962 it took on the name Pindad, an abbreviation of the term

Persindustrian TNI Angkatan Darat, or Army Industries. In the early 1980s the passing of Presidential Decrees Nos. 59/1983 and 6/1984 saw Pindad established as one of eight specific state-owned 'strategic industries' and its name was changed to Pindad PT (Persero).⁷⁰ Currently Pindad PT is controlled under a holding company called PT Bahana Pakarya Industri Strategis (Persero).⁷¹

Pindad's business operations are grouped into two sections: military and commercial products. These products are in turn manufactured by four companies, all of which are based in the Bandung area, about 125 kilometres south-east of Jakarta. The companies are weapons division, mechanical division, electric division, and the forging and casting division. Pindad's small arms are produced in a factory that was built by the German manufacturer Fritz Werner.⁷² The company's ammunition division is based Turen, Malang, East Java.⁷³

Current production

In the past, Pindad has manufactured the BM-59 rifle and Model 12 submachine gun, under licence from the Beretta company of Italy.⁷⁴ It also produced the Madsen-Saetter machine gun under licence from the Danish firm Madsen.⁷⁵ Today, the company's small arms production is dominated by the SS-1 assault rifle, which is a slightly modified version of the Belgian FN-FNC (Fabrique Nationale Carabine), made under licence from Fabrique Nationale.⁷⁶ Pindad manufactures four versions, which go under the names of SS1-V1, SS1-V2, SS1-V3 and SS1-V5.⁷⁷ The V1 is the standard weapon, with a retractable butt stock. The V2 is a carbine, and the V3 has the same barrel length as the V1, except with a solid polyamide butt assembly. The V5 is a short barrelled commando configuration that cannot take a bayonet.⁷⁸ According to Pindad's own brochures the V1, V2 and V3 offer selective firing of up to 760 RPM and are effective to a range of 600m with a telescopic sight and 400m without. The short-barrelled V5 has the same rate of fire, but is effective only to 150m without a telescopic sight (300m with). All use 5.56 x 45mm ammunition. As of late 1999, production of the SS-1 series was continuing, but according to industry reports 'at a reduced rate'.⁷⁹ Pindad did not reply to requests for additional information about their current line of products such as production numbers, exports or price. The SS-1 is not known to have been exported.

In addition to assault rifles, Pindad also makes handguns. It produces its own 9mm pistol and a .38 special calibre revolver. The pistol is believed to be a licensed copy of the Browning High-Power semi-automatic and is produced solely for use by the Indonesian military. It is not known to have been exported.⁸⁰

Ammunition

Pindad produces an extensive range of ammunition at its Turen factory, including 9mm parabellum, .38 special, 5.56mm parabellum, 5.56mm tracer,

5.56mm blank (M200), 7.62mm, 7.62mm tracer as well as ammunition for heavy machine guns, hand grenades and mortar shells. According to the arms industry publication *Forecast International*, Pindad has in the past sustained annual production runs of 5,000,000 rounds of 9mm parabellum, 5,000,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition and 10,000,000 rounds of 5.56mm ammunition.⁸¹ In the 1980s Pindad's production apparently reached sufficient levels that it was able to export small quantities of ammunition to other parts of Southeast Asia. It is believed that at some point Pindad was supplying the Royal Thai Army.⁸² These exports gradually expanded during the 1990s, although competition, particularly from Singapore, has hindered Pindad's efforts.⁸³ Pindad's current production is not known, but it seems unlikely that it has been able to maintain the levels of sales seen before the regional economic crisis.

Other small arms and light weapons

Pindad also produces mortar tubes, grenade launchers and associated ammunition. Of particular note here is the CIS 40mm Automatic Grenade Launcher, produced under licence from Chartered Industries of Singapore (now part of the Singapore Technologies group). Pindad also produces under licence the S411 40mm grenade for use with the system.⁸⁴ In terms of mortar ammunition, it currently produces two 60mm mortar shells (designated as GMO-6 PE A1 and A2) and an 80mm shell designated as GMO-8 PE A1. All use a PDM-111 B1 fuse. In addition, Pindad markets a range of grenades. These include a fragmentation grenade called a GT-5PE A2, which can either be thrown or fired from a rifle using a grenade launcher. When exploded the grenade produces approximately 1050 fragments, which create casualties within a 15m radius. A practice variant (GT-5H A2) and a dummy (GT-D A2) version of the grenade are also available.⁸⁵

Finally, the company also markets a range of crowd control and anti-riot products, including a 5.56mm rubber bullet called an MU-5 DK, a riot control grenade that dispenses colour dye (Type GT-W), a canister cartridge containing 12 pieces of rubber bullets (designated PK-10 DK), a tear gas canister cartridge (designated PG-10 DK) and a tear gas grenade designated GT-5 AR.

Commercial viability

No up-to-date figures are available on the value of Pindad's exports or its profitability. The company has found it difficult to compete on the export market for ammunition and the regional economic crisis has also affected its sales to the Indonesian government. An especially ominous development from the company's point of view was the decision of the Indonesian army (TNI-AD) to halt purchases of Pindad's 60mm and 81mm mortar bombs, choosing instead to import them from China.⁸⁶

Perhaps recognising these difficulties, Pindad is pressing the Indonesian government to develop a new infantry weapon for the TNI.⁸⁷ A detailed survey of Indonesian troops carried out by the company suggests that the TNI's existing weapons are not 'ergonomically suitable'.⁸⁸ Apparently, most Indonesian soldiers do not place their left hands on the hand guard of their automatic weapons while aiming. Although standard procedure recommends this, troops usually place their hands closer to the body between the hand guard and the magazine, at the front underneath the magazine, or between the magazine and the trigger. This exerts push-and-pull forces on the magazine, which over time can cause jamming, especially during long, rapid bursts of fire. Pindad's recommendation was that the Indonesian army should design a new standard infantry weapon, presumably one to be built by Pindad.⁸⁹ Given the state of the national economy and other, more pressing, defence requirements, it seems unlikely that designing and building new infantry weapons will be a priority for the Indonesian government in the near future. A more likely scenario is that any new weapons will be purchased from overseas. One option is China. According to a report in *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, a recent soft loan arrangement with China will enable the TNI to acquire the Chinese-made mortar ammunition 'and other infantry weapons' in the near future.⁹⁰

Domestic gun control

According to interviews and research conducted under the auspices of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) small arms do not present a major problem in Indonesia in terms of everyday crime. Guns are strictly controlled, at least on paper. In order to get a firearms licence, an applicant must be a member of a shooting club that is officially recognised by the government, and he or she must then apply to the Chief of Police for a licence for a hunting rifle or weapon for sport. If the application is approved, then a weapon can be purchased, but it must be kept at a police station. When the weapon is required for hunting, the licensee must ask for permission to take the weapon out. The police supply a letter authorising the bearer to have the weapon for a specific time and area. After use the gun must be returned to the police station.⁹¹

It is possible to lawfully own a weapon in Indonesia for self-defence purposes, but very few such licences are issued. According to figures gathered by CSCAP, there are only some 196 licences for the personal protection of selected government officials and private businesses.⁹² These are typically issued only to VIPs, such as members of parliament, directors of important companies, or the very rich.⁹³ In practice it is easy for people with connections or money to get a gun.⁹⁴ It is impossible to estimate how many people illegally own weapons for their own protection, although this problem was highlighted in September 2000 when former president Suharto's daughter, Mamiek, was arrested for possession of an illegal .22 calibre handgun.⁹⁵ In addition, there are some 8067

licences issued for security guards and special police to own weapons and 6513 licences for sport and hunting.⁹⁶ In total, there are fewer than 15,000 people licensed to own weapons in a country with a population of 200 million.

The relative lack of guns circulating in domestic society, especially within cities like Jakarta, has been identified by some officials as one reason the riots of May 1998 resulted in so few deaths.⁹⁷ Conversely, a number of press reports in 1999 suggested that purchasing small arms in Jakarta was relatively straightforward and that weapons were even being sold in up-market cafes and bars. Ethnic Chinese in particular sought weapons for self-defence after the riots of 1998. Prices seem comparatively high, however, suggesting there is not a large quantity of weapons available. One report priced an 'FN-45 pistol with a dozen bullets' at \$900.⁹⁸

Indonesia also controls the importation of small arms, ammunition and related products. To import a weapon, a company must be approved by the police. According to police sources, very few companies are granted permission. Every gun imported must then have an import permit. Weapons that are imported by the public cannot be standard military weapons and must be less powerful than those issued to the police or armed forces. For example, as the police use a .38 revolver, it would only be permissible to import and own a .32 calibre handgun.⁹⁹

In 1999 five private companies were charged with illegally importing hundreds of firearms, gas and electric shock weapons. They had apparently 'misused' a licence from the chief of the State Police to import and sell the guns. The companies allegedly involved in the importation were: PT Gawe Rapih, PT Darma Purnawira Lestari, PT Perinitis Sarana Pancing, PT Maju Purnama Abadi and PT Batu Karnas. Around the same time, the Indonesian Directorate of Customs and Excise also announced it had foiled a smuggling operation attempting to import some 265 pistols and 38 assorted firearms.¹⁰⁰

Illegal transfers

While the Indonesian police insist that illegal small arms do not represent a significant problem in terms of criminal activities in places like Jakarta, they are without doubt a serious concern in Indonesia's many zones of conflict. Of these, four stand out: Aceh, Maluku, West Papua and Timor.¹⁰¹ While it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss these conflicts in detail, the following sections briefly summarise the reasons for the ongoing hostilities, the weapons in use and how they reach the combatants.

- Aceh

Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (the Free Aceh Movement or GAM) is fighting for the establishment of a separate Acehnese state in what is now the province of Aceh on the northern tip of the island of Sumatra. The group was founded in

1976 and is led by Hasan de Tiro, an Acehnese now exiled in Sweden.¹⁰² Somewhere between 500-750 of the group's fighters received training in Libya in the 1980s.¹⁰³

GAM's rebels have been involved in a low-level guerrilla war against Indonesian forces for more than 20 years, but in the last few years their fortunes have significantly improved. Energised by the collapse of the Suharto regime and the return of activists from Malaysia and with people increasingly embittered by an oppressive military presence, GAM's total membership (across several factions) has increased from just a few hundred fighters to perhaps as many as 15,000.¹⁰⁴

Interviews, news reports and pictures of GAM forces suggest they are predominantly equipped with variants of the AK47, as well as M16s and some World War II vintage weapons.¹⁰⁵ Most of the AKs seem to be Chinese-made copies, like the Type 56. It is almost impossible to accurately quantify the number of illegal weapons circulating in a conflict zone like Aceh, but according to one tally advanced in an investigative report by the Indonesian magazine *FORUM Keadlian*, pro-independence forces have more than 1,100 AK47s (including variants such as the AK46 and AK74), almost 700 M16A1s, 52 FN Minimi LMGs, and more than 1,200 military style pistols.¹⁰⁶ Reports of GAM military operations also frequently mention the use of grenade-launchers and light machine guns.¹⁰⁷

There are several sources for these weapons. An important one is weapons captured from TNI forces during battle.¹⁰⁸ A second is leakage, including arms illegally sold to GAM by TNI forces or diverted from Pindad stocks.¹⁰⁹ This leakage is apparently a serious problem and indicates a breakdown in the chain of command between Jakarta and the provinces. One commentator described the military and police in Aceh as having 'an empire of their own'.¹¹⁰ Another recent report quoted a GAM leader as saying many of its weapons originate with the TNI. 'Kopassus was the principal player in arms sales, but that is no longer the case. Most of our weapons are bought from the TNI in cash transactions. They sell [weapons] to us — many, many — including SS-1, AK-201 (sic) and AK47. It is not a problem for us to get weapons... three generals in Jakarta are our main suppliers.'¹¹¹

A third source is transfers from outside Indonesia. Indonesian military forces have long complained that weapons were reaching GAM from 'a neighbouring country' and although they have been reluctant to name names, the references are to Malaysia.¹¹² There are differences of opinion about the involvement of the Malaysian government in the smuggling. Some analysts in Malaysia suggest the government turns a blind eye to GAM's activities, but informed sources in Jakarta argue that Kuala Lumpur is not involved, although local officials in the heavily Islamic state of Kedah may be.¹¹³ The Malaysian government naturally denies any role and one government official insisted GAM is much more active in Stockholm and New York than Malaysia.

There is consensus among analysts and diplomats in both Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta that a large number of small arms smuggled to GAM move through southern Thailand and the northern Malaysian port of Penang, which has a large Acehnese population. Many of these arms are believed to come originally from Cambodia. Some reports suggest they pass through Southern Thailand with the help of the Thai separatist group the Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO).¹¹⁴ According to an official based in Aceh, weapons are transported across the Straits of Malacca in small boats, and are often retransferred again at sea, before reaching their final destinations in places near Lhokseumawe, Padang, Tanjung Balai and Peureulak.¹¹⁵ Sumatra's coastline provides plenty of isolated spots to land and the use of small boats makes interdiction at sea by Malaysian or Indonesian naval and marine forces extremely difficult.

One final source for GAM weapons may be local production. While reports are very sketchy, wire service stories suggest that GAM may have acquired some kind of primitive local arms production capacity. According to Agence France Presse, on 25 February 2001, four alleged GAM rebels were killed when Indonesian troops raided a warehouse in the village of Batee, Bireun District, believed to be used by the group for making weapons. Few details were available, but the troops reportedly seized a number of pistols and rifles from the site.¹¹⁶

Like the weapons themselves, GAM's funding for its small arms purchases seems to come from a disparate range of sources. The group collects various 'taxes' in the province and also solicits 'donations' from local people, often at armed checkpoints. GAM is also reported to have generated income by extorting payments from the major businesses in Aceh, including Mobil Oil, PT Arun and ASEAN Aceh Fertilisers. Infrastructure projects in the province are reportedly taxed at 10 per cent. According to one analyst, GAM has charged companies building railway tracks in the province as much as 1 million rupiah per kilometre for 'protection'.¹¹⁷ It has also been accused of selling marijuana to buy guns.¹¹⁸

Singapore is apparently an important financial centre for GAM. A Singaporean businessman is allegedly the finance minister in the Acehnese government-in-exile. According to a source in Jakarta, money traced to Singaporean bank accounts has been funnelled to GAM and has been found on people arrested and charged with supporting the insurgents.¹¹⁹

- **Maluku**

In January 1999, fighting broke out between Muslim and Christian groups in Maluku, an island group in eastern Indonesia. While typically framed in simple religious terms, the conflict is also about economic disparities and relations between Indonesia's outlying provinces and Jakarta. In the two years since the latest fighting began as many as 8000 people have been killed.

A large number of small arms of varying quality are involved in the conflict in Maluku. According to news reports, both sides seem to be armed with rifles, light mortars, grenades and bombs, but homemade weapons also seem to be prevalent.¹²⁰ For example, in February 2000, the Indonesian military seized some 4,000 weapons from warring parties. Many of these were homemade rifles and bombs, which were disposed of by being dumped into the waters of Tanjung Alang.¹²¹ Army raids carried out under a state of emergency declared in June 2000 led to the confiscation of 32 'army standard rifles', including AK47s, SMR Bren MR3s, and Rugers, as well as 278 home-made rifles. The army also seized four rocket launchers of an unspecified variety, hundreds of hand grenades and 3,070 rounds of ammunition.¹²² In early August 2000 the acting governor of North Maluku oversaw the destruction of 23 standard rifles (including two M16s) 4279 homemade rifles, 2278 homemade bazookas and 1097 detonators.¹²³

There are four major sources through which the parties fighting in Maluku obtain small arms. First, there is credible evidence that a significant number of weapons have been directly supplied to both sides by Indonesian government forces.¹²⁴ Residents of villages on Ambon attacked by rioters reported finding ammunition fragments bearing military markings at blast sites. A spokesman for the Ambon Military Command also confirmed that there had been reports of smuggling of military ammunition into the territory.¹²⁵ Generally, the TNI has been accused of siding with Muslim settlers in the conflict, including supplying them with small arms and ammunition, while the Indonesian Police's Mobile Brigade (BRIMOB) has been accused of supporting and supplying Christian forces with weapons.¹²⁶ An *Economist* article in March 2001, claimed soldiers and police were selling M16s and AK47s for as much as \$700 each.¹²⁷

A second source is 'leakage' of weapons from poorly guarded or insecure army and police armouries. The importance of this channel cannot be overstated. For example, in just one attack on a police station in Tantui in July 2000, 823 military-style rifles were stolen. Of these 115 were later recovered, but more than 700 of the weapons apparently remain in circulation.¹²⁸ In a conflict such as the Malukus, where many of the small arms in use are homemade or obsolete, modern military equipment obtained in such a manner can make a decisive difference to the local balance of power.

The third source is supply from sympathetic groups inside Indonesia. The Muslim group Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jammaah (Jihad Force) has been identified by several analysts and diplomats as a source of weapons to Muslim settlers in Maluku, especially early on in the conflict.¹²⁹ In April/May 2000 there were also unconfirmed reports that nine container loads of weapons were unloaded at Ambon and taken to the local Al-Fatah mosque.¹³⁰ In July 2000 Defence Minister Juwono Sudarsono said 'the dispatch of Laskar Jihad and any other forces has reached almost 10,000 people in the last three months

and they have become the main reason for the ongoing ground conflict.¹³¹ A Christian equivalent, Laskar Kristus, has also more recently appeared in the Malukus.

Weapons are also being funnelled from elsewhere in Indonesia to the combatants. In July 2000 the navy seized 200 grenades and grenade launchers and 7000 rounds of ammunition aboard the liner *KM Dobonsolo*, which had sailed from Surabaya via Bali and Kupang.¹³² Two months later security officials in the port of Buli, North Maluku, seized hundreds of M16 rounds, rifles and explosives from the passenger liner *KM Albatim*. Authorities suspected that the arms had come from Bitung in North Sulawesi, the *Albatim*'s point of departure.¹³³

Finally, there are also rumours and reports that weapons reach combatants from sympathisers in the Philippines. According to the Indonesian navy's Eastern Fleet commander, Commodore Djoko Sumarsono, weapons from the Philippines were being freely traded in Maluku. 'Anyone with a certain amount of money can purchase guns [in the southern Philippines],' he told the *Jakarta Post*.¹³⁴ In January 2000 the Indonesian newspaper *Suara Merdeka* reported claims that a helicopter had airlifted a shipment of weapons from Davao in the Philippines to Ambon with the tacit approval of the TNI. No evidence was provided to support this allegation, which was strongly denied by the Indonesian military.¹³⁵

A more likely route between the Philippines and Maluku is by sea. According to a North Maluku Military Commander, most of the weapons destroyed in the August ceremony described above were made in the Philippines and were confiscated from passengers during raids on sea ports.¹³⁶ Indonesian navy ships have intercepted several vessels from the Philippines carrying weapons in the past 12 months. In July 2000, three ships loaded with unspecified weaponry were stopped en route to Halmahera and Ternate in North Maluku.¹³⁷ In January 2001 the navy intercepted what it described as a 'traditional vessel' from the Philippines. The vessel was apparently destined for the Malukus carrying six guns and 454 bullets. The guns were World War II vintage.¹³⁸

While many of these shipments are believed to be from Muslim insurgents in Mindanao, there are also reports that Christian groups have been supplied with small arms produced in the Philippines. While the source of these weapons is unclear, one possibility is the numerous illegal gun factories located in largely Christian Cebu.¹³⁹ There have also been press reports suggesting a link between East Timorese militias and Christian groups in Maluku. Accounts published in February 2000 quoted an Ambonese Christian saying he had bought three M16s for 15 million rupiah and six handguns for six million rupiah from Timorese militiamen.¹⁴⁰ He claimed to have been buying weapons from the militias since July 1999 and said that guns and hand grenades could be easily bought from militia personnel now living in Kupang. The weapons were apparently smuggled back to Ambon in small boats to avoid a naval blockade.

- Timor

The problem of small arms in East Timor seized the world's attention when pro-Jakarta militia forces went on a bloody rampage in September 1999 after a UN-supervised referendum overwhelmingly supported independence for the former Portuguese colony. Both pro-Jakarta and pro-independence forces have access to small arms, although these are of varying quality. Many are homemade and some appear to be obsolete remnants of the Portuguese colonial presence.¹⁴¹ Many modern small arms were also used in the Timorese conflict, but their source is a matter of some conjecture.

At the time of the September 1999 violence, there were numerous media reports suggesting that the TNI directly supplied military small arms to the pro-Jakarta militias. Several aid groups and the Indonesian government's own Human Rights Commission supported this conclusion.¹⁴² A spokesman for the Department of Defense and Security/ABRI also admitted that the TNI had supplied weapons to pro-integration civilians in East Timor in the past. According to Major General Syamsul Ma'arif, the weapons were supplied to 'the people's resistance force' to counter attacks by the pro-independence group, FALINTIL. He also claimed that the weapons were withdrawn once the threats disappeared.¹⁴³

In the recent conflict on the island, militias were certainly armed with some former TNI weapons. In September 1999 INTERFET forces carried out a surprise raid on the town of Com and captured a large cache of former Soviet block arms, including SKS automatic rifles. As was noted above, SKS rifles were used by the TNI in the 1960s, so Indonesian forces were a possible source of supply. Australian troops uncovered another huge arms cache in Dili in September 1999. The arms, which belonged to the TNI's 744 Battalion in the eastern suburb of Becora included M16s, .50 calibre machine guns and 9mm sub-machine guns. The departing TNI forces had apparently attempted to destroy the weapons by burning them.¹⁴⁴ Despite these finds, there are differences of opinion about how well-organised arms transfers were and who was behind them.

Some writers have made a strong case that senior elements of the Indonesian military were involved in a plan to arm the militia movements in the lead up to the referendum. According to Damien Kingsbury, the then Commander-in-Chief of the TNI, General Wiranto and the head of military intelligence Major-General Zacky Anwar Makarim both played 'an active role' in the establishment of the militia movements.¹⁴⁵ By August 1999 pro-Jakarta groups who had previously only been armed with homemade weapons and shotguns, were being re-equipped with TNI weapons, including M16s, G3s, SS-1s and AK47 automatic rifles, 9mm pistols and hand grenades. As Kingsbury concedes, however, 'by this stage... the distinction between the militias and the TNI and the police had become very blurred on the ground'.¹⁴⁶ A report by James Dunn, a UN observer in the 1999 plebiscite, comes to a similar conclusion.¹⁴⁷

According to Dunn, Makarim was 'widely reported to have been responsible for militia terror against independence supporters and UN workers'. He also accuses a leading officer in Kopassus (special forces), Major-General Syafie Syamsuddin, and the Bali-based commander of East Timor, Major-General Adam Damiri, of complicity.¹⁴⁸

Some diplomats in Jakarta, while not disputing these claims, put more emphasis on the actions of rogue elements in the military or soldiers acting in an *oknum* (or unauthorised) fashion.¹⁴⁹ They say arms were transferred for a variety of reasons, including political affiliation, financial gain and also where TNI soldiers married into Timorese families.¹⁵⁰ They make the argument that transfers were indicative of a general breakdown in the chain of command between Jakarta and Timor, rather than an expression of government policy.

According to one source, at least some of the TNI weapons that were used by the militias were likely captured from Falintil forces who had themselves taken them from TNI soldiers during the civil war.¹⁵¹ A report in *Jane's Intelligence Review*, claimed that apart from a few old Portuguese colonial weapons, 'all [of Falintil's] guns, ammunition, and uniforms came from ambushing Indonesian forces.'¹⁵² The importance of this kind of transfer continued while Interfet was in Timor. An FN Minimi light machine gun taken from a New Zealand peacekeeper killed on duty subsequently turned up among weapons seized from the militias.¹⁵³

Since the intervention of Interfet and the return of peace to East Timor, guns have been confiscated and collected as part of a UN effort to disarm the militias. Several commentators, including UN officials, have been critical of the implementation of the plan and the lack of support from Indonesian forces in West Timor.¹⁵⁴ It is widely suspected that the militias have kept caches of modern military weapons and have only handed in obsolete and homemade guns.¹⁵⁵ This is very difficult to verify, but official Indonesian figures show seizures of homemade weapons greatly outnumber military small arms. Of the weapons confiscated and collected from refugees in Atambua in late 2000 there were 10 M16s, 77 SKS rifles, 6 FN46 pistols, 8 GETMI, 6 Mausers, 2 Sten guns, 2 SPs, 1 LEs [Lee Enfield's?], and 1 'jungle rifle'. In contrast, the same sweep collected over 1300 homemade weapons.¹⁵⁶

In a depressing reprise of the Timorese tragedy, it now appears that some of the remaining militia weapons have been sold on to the warring parties in Maluku. In February 2000, a former pro-Jakarta militia leader, Florentino Moko Soares, was arrested in Kefamenanu, in North Timor Tengah district and charged with illegally trading firearms near the border between East Timor and East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). The weapons he was accused of selling were apparently leftovers from the Portuguese colonial presence.¹⁵⁷ Other reports suggest that militia members in Kupang have sold guns and grenades to the combatants in Maluku.¹⁵⁸

- Irian Jaya (West Papua)

A low level secessionist movement has been active on Irian Jaya (West Papua) since 1976. The Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Movement or OPM) is seeking independence for the ethnic Melanesians of the area, which was incorporated into Indonesia in 1963. Using bases across the border in Papua New Guinea it has maintained a low-level insurgency, occasionally attacking Indonesian military patrols and taking hostages.¹⁵⁹ For most of the past 25 years OPM has made little headway, but the collapse of the Suharto regime and the successful independence struggle on East Timor has re-energised secessionist forces in West Papua. The pro-independence movement now includes groups other than the OPM. During 2000 there were several violent incidents between supporters of independence and the Indonesian military.

For the most part, the parties involved in the nascent conflict in Irian Jaya/ West Papua are poorly armed. They rely predominantly on swords, spears and arrows, although some individuals have access to home-made guns and hunting rifles.¹⁶⁰ According to some reports, however, the pro-independence forces on West Papua have allegedly attempted to obtain weapons from Papua New Guinea and Australia.¹⁶¹ Police sources in Jakarta claim that small arms purchases from PNG are being funded by the sale of marijuana from Irian Jaya.¹⁶² Australian sources also report attempts by the OPM to buy weapons from northern Australia and several West Irianese have been arrested in connection with this type of activity.¹⁶³ Military and customs personnel in Port Moresby say the OPM is very active along the border around Kiunga and Fly River and purchases weapons from PNG's Highlands region.¹⁶⁴ They also acknowledge that the border with Irian Jaya is essentially impossible to police. Some reports about weapons smuggling into West Papua, however, should be treated with scepticism. In early July 2000 *The Jakarta Post* quoted the Speaker of the Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), Amien Rais, as saying 12,000 guns had been smuggled into West Papua.¹⁶⁵ There has been no confirmation of this, and diplomats in Jakarta were deeply skeptical about the claims.¹⁶⁶

In another disturbing parallel to the East Timorese situation, 2000 saw the emergence of rival militia groups in Irian Jaya: the pro-independence Satgas Papua (Papuan Taskforce) and pro-Jakarta Satgas Merah Putih (Red and White Taskforce). The latter has reportedly received funds from the government and may also have been infiltrated by Pemuda Pancasila, a terror group used by former president Suharto to undermine his opponents.¹⁶⁷ Although neither Satgas Papua nor Satgas Merah Putih is currently believed to be armed, there have been rumours that they are engaged in military training.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

The Lao PDR does not produce its own small arms or ammunition, but is largely dependent on imports from China. These have been provided since 1993 in exchange for the right to operate listening posts in southern Laos. There are very low levels of gun-related crime in the country, but the government in Vientiane is increasingly worried about several insurgencies: two ethnic Hmong factions in the north of the country and pro-monarchist rebels operating out of Thailand and Cambodia.

National inventory

A good deal of the military equipment currently circulating in Laos dates back at least as far as the Vietnam War. The Lao People's Army (LPA) inventory is made up principally of weapons from China, the former Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc states, as well as from Vietnam. It includes Soviet-made 7.62mm Tokarev and 9mm Makarov pistols, the Croat CZ 70 9mm pistol; 9mm MAT-49 submachine guns dating back to the French colonial presence; 7.62mm PPSH-41 sub-machine guns; Soviet AK47s and SKS rifles, Chinese Type 56s, and the 7.62mm RPK light machine gun. (The RPK is in fact actually just a heavy-barrelled version of the standard AK47.) There is also a stock of old US-made arms in circulation, including M1 carbines. While one commentator suggests these are 'almost certainly obsolete and of little operational capacity', a few M1s have been seen in use by tribal peoples as hunting weapons.¹⁶⁸

In 1993 the Lao government signed an agreement with China to supply the LPA with arms and ammunition as part of a barter exchange arrangement which gives Beijing the right to operate signals intelligence and electronic surveillance posts in the south of Laos.¹⁶⁹ One estimate claims that 1600 tonnes of military equipment have been shipped from China since the agreement was signed, mostly in the form of small arms and ammunition. There are no reports available of specific weapon types, although the deal likely includes the ubiquitous Type 56 assault rifle. Laos also signed a military technology agreement with Russia in 1997. The deal provided for the shipment of unspecified Russian military equipment to Laos and for the training of Lao armed forces personnel in Russia. The Lao Defence Minister Ghoummali Sai-Gnason visited Russian arms manufacturers and suppliers to examine products on offer.¹⁷⁰

Laos is not known to have any capacity for the production of small arms and, according to Lao officials, the country does not produce its own weapons or ammunition.¹⁷¹ There are, however, two explosives factories that have been operating in the country since 1995. One is a joint venture between the Lao military and a firm based in the Chinese province of Yunnan. The enterprise goes under the name Lao-Yun Co Limited. The other operation is a cooperative venture between the Lao Ministry of Defence and the Swedish-Australian

company, Dyno-Wesfarmers. The explosives produced in both factories are intended for the development of hydro-electric schemes, road-blasting and mining but could potentially be diverted for military purposes.¹⁷²

Given the dire state of the Lao economy, it seems unlikely that Laos will be making any investment in indigenous defence production in the immediate future. Rather, China has emerged as the dominant (perhaps sole) supplier of arms to the Lao government, and is likely to continue to supply small arms and ammunition to the LPA.

Gun control

In terms of the illicit circulation of weapons in Laos, frequent visitors report seeing far fewer weapons in public than five years ago, even in out-lying districts beyond effective government control.¹⁷³ Despite this, some weapons are circulating in society and crime committed with military weapons sometimes occurs, although infrequently. In March 2000 several people at a restaurant in Vientiane were injured when what was described in press reports as a 'primitive grenade' was lobbed from a passing motorbike.¹⁷⁴ In September 2000, Lao police arrested a husband and wife in Vientiane after discovering 2400 small weapons in their shops and home. The weapons were only described as 'pistols and carbines'.¹⁷⁵ There have also been persistent, if unconfirmed, rumours that in November 2000 Lao police caught eight people trying to smuggle hand grenades into the grounds of the That Luang festival in Vientiane. The incident was apparently implausibly explained away by the Lao government as eight young men from the countryside who brought the grenades with them for protection in the big city.¹⁷⁶

Hmong insurgency

The regime in Vientiane is concerned about the movement of small arms along the borders with Thailand, Burma and Cambodia and in the mountainous north where ethnic Hmong carry on a low-level insurgency. Many Hmong fought with the United States during the Indochinese wars and according to a US Senate report, the Reagan administration secretly used donations from POW-MIA groups to arm and supply anti-communist Laotian rebels during the early 1980s.¹⁷⁷ Some of these weapons are almost certainly still in circulation and in working order. The Hmong rebels are reportedly divided into two camps. The weaker group called the United Lao National Liberation Front (ULNLF) is aligned with General Van Pao, the wartime leader who now lives in the United States.¹⁷⁸ Pa Kao Her, a former major in Van Pao's army, heads the stronger group, known as the Chao Faa movement.

It is difficult to gauge the size of the two Hmong forces, but in total they are believed to have between two and four thousand members, as well as informal support from Hmong villagers disaffected with government resettlement pro-

grams.¹⁷⁹ They capture many of their weapons from government soldiers as well as receiving some smuggled supplies from Thailand, Cambodia and Burma.¹⁸⁰ While analysts based in Laos question the ability of the Hmong to sustain a serious challenge to the communist regime, there have been some bloody encounters between rebels and government troops.¹⁸¹ In June 1999, Hmong rebels fought LPA troops around Nong Het, a mountainous area between the Plain of Jars and the Vietnamese border. In January 2000 they attacked the village of Khoun on the Plain of Jars, killing six people and burning buildings.¹⁸² There have even been credible reports that a major rebel offensive in 2000 forced the Lao army to ask Vietnamese combat troops for help for the first time since the 1980s.¹⁸³

There are also persistent claims, including from the Lao government, that the Hmong rebels have supporters outside of Laos. In particular, they are believed to receive funding and encouragement from Hmong now living in the United States.¹⁸⁴ One expert on Indochinese politics and security has concluded that 'the resurgence of Hmong activity is due in part to the provision of funds from Hmong exiles living in the United States and the purchase and supply of black market arms'.¹⁸⁵

Occasionally Hmong Americans have become involved in the fighting themselves. According to Bertil Lintner, shortly after the outbreak of the June 1999 fighting, two American citizens, Michael Vang and Hua Ly, crossed over into Laos from the Thai town of Chiang Khong with the aim of starting a rebellion in Bo Keo province. (Vang was the nephew of General Van Pao.) Armed with assault rifles and a backpack of money they planned to buy off the governor of Bo Keo with the hope that their insurrection would spread south towards Vientiane. However, when word of their money leaked out, they were robbed, killed and their bodies were dumped in the Mekong.¹⁸⁶

Monarchist rebels

In addition to the Hmong insurgency, Laos has been racked by a series of mysterious bomb explosions over the past two years. It has also suffered several cross border attacks from rebels based in Thailand and Cambodia.¹⁸⁷ The bombs are believed by many analysts to be signs of a power struggle within the regime itself, but the cross border attacks are the work of anti-communist rebels associated with the former Lao monarchy.¹⁸⁸

In July 2000, a group of some 70 armed men attacked immigration and customs offices at Vangtao in Champasak Province, near the Thai border town of Chong Mek.¹⁸⁹ The group, including several elderly men who could barely fire their weapons, briefly raised the old royalist flag over a customs office.¹⁹⁰ After a short gun battle with LPA forces which left a number of rebels dead, the insurgents retreated into Thailand where 27 were arrested and the rest fled. Eleven of the arrested men were Thai nationals.¹⁹¹ Thai forces also confiscated

130 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, 130 grenades and two RPGs from the group.¹⁹² One of the rebels injured in the attack was identified as a former officer in the Royalist Lao Army. The rebel group is widely believed to be supported by anti-communist Laotians living in California.¹⁹³ Several days later Thai police raided a house in northeastern Ubon Ratchanthani province belonging to the alleged leader of the group, Sisouk Salyasaeng, and found an assault rifle and ammunition and Lao resistance paraphernalia.¹⁹⁴

Cambodian military intelligence officials have also reported that 'increasingly active' rebel groups cross over into Laos from Cambodia's northern Preah Vihear province, although they deny claims that the group maintains permanent bases in the country.¹⁹⁵ The *Cambodian Daily* newspaper reported in July 2000 that Lao rebels were buying weapons and ammunition stolen from RCAF military bases. It also claimed that the rebels maintained occasional contact with the small anti-communist insurgent group active in Cambodia, the Free Khmer, and with the anti-communist Free Vietnam Movement.¹⁹⁶ An unnamed Cambodian general cited in an Agence France Presse report admitted that weapons had gone missing from depots near the Lao border and were believed to have been sold to Lao rebels.¹⁹⁷

Malaysia

Malaysia has attempted to sustain an indigenous small arms industry since the early 1970s. It has produced several modern weapons under licence as well as a range of ammunition and ordnance. Exports did not perform as well as expected, however, and the state-owned arms firm SME ceased its weapons production activities in early 2001. It continues to manufacture ammunition and spares. Gun control in Malaysia is strict and few people own weapons. Despite that, the Malaysian government has been alarmed by several high-profile incidents of leakage from military stocks. It is also concerned about the transnational implications of insurgencies in Indonesia and the southern Philippines.

Domestic production

Malaysia's small arms production began in 1969 with the creation of a joint venture, Syarikat Malaysia Explosives, between the Malaysian government, the explosives manufacturer Dynamit Nobel and the Swiss company, Oerlikon Machine Tools.¹⁹⁸ SME began commercially producing ammunition for the Malaysian army in 1972. Two years later the Malaysian government bought out its foreign partners and SME became a wholly-owned government entity.¹⁹⁹ Starting its production with 9mm ammunition, the company soon converted its lines to 7.62mm rounds, due to a lack of demand for 9mm.²⁰⁰ In 1978 Malaysia began to produce NATO standard 5.56mm ammunition. The machinery involved was apparently mostly French, but also included German and Swiss components.²⁰¹

Today, a single, government-controlled group of companies, SME Group, dominates small arms production in the country. Established in 1985, it has its headquarters in Damansara, just outside Kuala Lumpur. SME is 100 per cent owned by the Malaysian government through a holding company called Khazanah Nasional Bhd. A subsidiary of SME Group, SME Technologies, manufactures small arms. Until recently, SME produced a number of small arms products, including assault rifles, pistols, ammunition, ordnance and explosives in its factories at Batu Aurang and Sungabulu. On 16 February 2001, SME's arms production operation announced that it was closing.²⁰²

Prior to developing its own weapons production capacity Malaysia relied on imports of 7.62mm German G3s, 5.56mm Colt M16A1s and Heckler and Koch HK33s which it assembled.²⁰³ The M16 subsequently became the standard infantry weapon and 200,000 M16A1 (Model 613) and 5,000 carbines (Model 653) were imported from Colt.²⁰⁴ In the mid-1980s Malaysia invited Singapore's Chartered Industries to tender for the licensed production of its SAR-80 assault rifle. When CIS realised that Malaysia wanted to include a re-export clause in the agreement, which would allow them to compete with Singapore in foreign markets, they did not even bother to submit a tender.²⁰⁵ Ultimately, an agreement was struck with the Austrian company Steyr Daimler Puch, and SME was licensed to produce the Steyr AUG A1 assault rifle. Production began in 1991.²⁰⁶

The AUG is a 'bullpup' design, which makes it 25 per cent shorter than other rifles with similar barrel lengths but without compromising ballistic performance. The bullpup design does away with the folding stock feature found on many rifles, allowing the AUG to be quickly available for accurate shoulder firing. The weapon can take a magazine with either 30 or 42 rounds and has a rate of fire of 650 rounds per minute.²⁰⁷

The AUG is completely modular in design. All components, including barrels, receivers and spare parts are completely interchangeable from weapon to weapon. This is an advantage, as with the addition of special equipment and accessories, a single AUG can be tailored to suit a wide variety of operational requirements. SME Technologies advertised four variants of the AUG: an assault rifle, light support weapon, machine carbine and commando (para), but it is not known how many of each they delivered to the Malaysian armed forces.²⁰⁸ The Steyr AUG also comes with a 1.5x optical sight built-in to the receiver.

SME was licensed to produce 175,000 AUG rifles over 15 years.²⁰⁹ Its Sungabulu plant was fully automated and used Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) machinery, which, according to company CEO Ismail Kadir, was 'state of the art'.²¹⁰ SME was able to produce some 1000 Steyrs a month at Sungabulu, or a total of 12,000-15,000 weapons annually.²¹¹ The weapon's barrel, bolt mechanism and receiver were all manufactured at Sungabulu, while plastic components were produced at SME's Batu Arang factory. Some aluminium components (such as the body of the weapon's optical sight and the

aluminium parts of the receiver) were made by another casting company in Kuala Lumpur.²¹² SME received a semi-finished product which it then machined down and assembled. Assembly and testing of the weapons took place at Sungabulu. While SME was capable of producing some 70 per cent of the parts for the weapon, it imported the optics for the Steyr's sight from Austria and Japan.²¹³

The principal demand for the Malaysian-built Steyr was domestic. Since starting production in 1991, SME has supplied 106,000 rifles to the Malaysian Army, although these are being gradually phased into active use.²¹⁴ Army use appears to be divided almost equally between the Steyr and the M16 and some territorial units apparently still use the HKG3, the HK33E and the Armalite SLR.²¹⁵ Given that the Malaysian army is estimated at some 80,000 men, SME production figures suggest that a number of Steyrs were produced for reserve stocks. This may have implications for the future sale of old weapons currently in national holdings.

SME's licence agreement with Steyr permitted the export of weapons. According to public statements by Prime Minister Mahathir, Malaysia has exported the AUG in the past.²¹⁶ Company officials were reluctant to discuss the subject of transfers, but did admit they had sold a small numbers of AUGs (in the range of several hundred units) to overseas buyers. One official said that those exports included a 'small quantity' to Pakistan.²¹⁷ Company representatives also said they had taken part in international bidding to supply weapons to the Philippines and to Kenya.²¹⁸ There have also been orders or expressions of interest from South America, Africa, the Middle East and from within ASEAN.²¹⁹ Statements by company management at the time of its closing suggest that SME was not particularly successful at obtaining export orders.²²⁰

In addition to the Steyr AUG assault rifle, SME also produced another Steyr weapon under licence — the Tactical Mission Pistol (TMP). This is a 9mm submachine gun, made almost entirely of synthetic material.²²¹ The TMP can take a magazine with 15, 20 or 25 rounds. The weapon had been produced under contract from Steyr since 1998 and SME officials admit to exporting small numbers, including 39 units to the Philippines where it is apparently used by some Special Forces units.²²² SME hoped the weapon might be adopted by the Malaysian police and military, and according to Ismail Kadir, anticipated a production capacity for the TMP of 500 units per month. These hopes were dashed with closure of the plant in February 2001.

Ammunition and ordnance

In addition to small arms, SME's sister company, SME Ordnance Sdn Bhd (SMEO), makes a range of ammunition at its factory in Batu Arang. Since 1972 the company has produced 9mm, 7.62mm, .38 Special, and 5.56mm ammunition. In 1989 it started to produce its own shotgun cartridges, using Italian

machinery.²²³ According to SMEO management, the company has the capacity to produce 16 million rounds of 9mm ammunition annually, 48 million rounds of 5.56mm, and 32 million rounds of 7.62mm.²²⁴ The American industry journal *Forecast International* has also reported that Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF) has been involved in a collaborative project to share manufacturing technology with Malaysia.²²⁵

In addition to small calibre ammunition, SMEO has in the past produced the LAP 1 HE 60mm mortar shell, which has a range of 1600 metres and its own SMEO 14 HE 80mm mortar shell, with a range of 5100 metres. Both are listed by industry publications as 'in production' and are in service with the Malaysian Army.²²⁶ SMEO also produces a light-weight fragmentation grenade, designated as HE HG85, which it claims is the 'ideal weapon for use in the forest, jungle and in open country.'²²⁷ The company also manufactures several CS gas and coloured smoke grenades, thunderflashes and signaling cartridges.²²⁸

While SMEO brochures claim the company can produce anything from 9mm ammunition to 155mm artillery shells and even 'aircraft bombs and rockets', actual production runs are very small and a lot of the ordnance advertised is not being manufactured at all.²²⁹ In October 2000, an SMEO production manager estimated that the factory was only working at about 20 per cent of capacity.²³⁰ Most of the company's past production has gone to the Malaysian army and police, although SMEO also tenders for export business. According to company executives, SMEO receives enquiries from overseas, including from Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia and the US.²³¹ Past exports have gone to Nigeria, New Zealand and the United States, although such deals were apparently 'rare'.²³² One reason for this is SMEO's inability to compete on price. A Kuala Lumpur-based analyst described Malaysian ammunition as 'the most expensive in the region'.²³³ Company officials admit that because of the need to import brass rods, brass plates and primers from Germany and Austria, SMEO ammunition costs between 5 and 20 per cent more than similar products on the market.²³⁴

According to company representatives, the Malaysian government has bought little new ammunition since 1997 due to economic constraints.²³⁵ The lack of government business means SMEO will likely put more efforts into exporting in the future, although it will continue to face difficulties competing on price. In late 2000, SMEO re-opened negotiations for a long-term contract for ammunition with the Malaysian government, hoping for a five-year agreement. Despite the closure of the arms producing sector of the company, SME Ordnance will continue to manufacture ammunition and spares.

Illegal arms circulation

The Malaysian government is increasingly concerned about the circulation of illegal weapons among criminal and political groups. The police have made

several arrests involving arms smuggling along the Malaysian-Thai border, and have also reported that weapons smuggled from Indonesia have been offered for sale.²³⁶

The problem of illegal weapons was highlighted in July 2000, when a large cache of military weapons was stolen in a daring heist from an army camp near Grik in Perak state. Fifteen men dressed in military uniforms persuaded sentries to let them into the camp and seized more than 100 M16 and Steyr rifles, machine guns, grenade launchers, mortar shells and thousands of rounds of ammunition.²³⁷ After a five-day standoff, during which two hostages were killed, the group surrendered.²³⁸ The Malaysian government quickly laid the blame for the raid at the door of a religious cult known as Al Ma'unah ('Brotherhood of Inner Power'). An investigation also implicated several Malaysian soldiers sympathetic to the group and a Malaysian army captain was among those arrested at the scene of the Perak siege.²³⁹ It remains unclear whether or not all the weapons taken in the raid have been recovered. During early August 2000 some of the missing arms were seized by police from a group allegedly planning an attack on targets near Kuala Lumpur.²⁴⁰

While this incident made headlines, the robbery was not unprecedented. Four AUG automatic rifles were stolen from the Armed Forces' Royal Ordnance Corps armoury in Kamaunting, Perak on July 28 1999.²⁴¹ These weapons ended up in the hands of a criminal group the media quickly tagged 'the Steyr Gang' which carried out a number of armed robberies on banks and finance companies.²⁴² Four members of the gang were eventually shot dead and the weapons were recovered.²⁴³ One of the dead was a former sniper attached to the Malaysian Army's Commando Unit based at Kuala Kubu Bharu.²⁴⁴ Another soldier, reportedly the 'mastermind' behind the group, was arrested in Bandar Baru Selayang in August 2000.²⁴⁵

Support for insurgencies

In addition to leakage from military arsenals, illegal weapons are also circulating in the porous border region between East Malaysia and the Philippines. Some of these are carried by fishermen, who arm themselves against pirates and who have little time for immigration formalities when moving back and forth across the Malaysia-Philippines border. But analysts in Kuala Lumpur also report that there is also a low level of arms smuggling in the area, including barter trade where goods such as fish or timber are swapped for weapons. These are suspected of going to Philippines insurgent groups such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Abu Sayyaf. After Abu Sayyaf members kidnapped several foreign tourists from the resort island of Sipadan in 2000, the Malaysian armed forces stepped up patrols in the region. There are also persistent rumours that the Malaysian government continues to tacitly support the transfer of small arms to the MILF, but these cannot be confirmed.²⁴⁶

The Malaysian government strongly denies any involvement.²⁴⁷

In western Malaysia the most frequently cited arms smuggling route is across the Straits of Malacca to Aceh. The port of Penang, with its large Acehnese population, is an important point for the movement of illegal goods of all kinds, including arms and weapons from Cambodia and Thailand, are believed to pass through Penang en route to the Aceh Merdeka rebels.²⁴⁸ According to analysts in Jakarta, officials in the Malaysian state of Kedah play an active role in this smuggling. For more details on smuggling to Aceh, see the Indonesian country study.

Myanmar (Burma)²⁴⁹

Historically, Myanmar has relied on a number of key supplier states for its small arms needs, notably China, Israel, Germany, Pakistan and Singapore. Thanks to technology transfers, however, it now manufactures a range of its own small arms for use by its military, the Tatmadaw. Myanmar is believed to be near self-sufficient in small calibre ammunition and also produces some of its own ordnance and light weapons. While mass production of small arms is underway, there is no evidence that the regime has exported either arms or ammunition. Illicit arms transfers are a major problem in the areas along the Thai, Indian and Bangladeshi borders, where several rebel groups continue to resist the rule of the military government. Burma is also host to several large, well-funded and well-equipped private armies that have ceasefire arrangements with the government. Some of these are involved in illegal arms sales and drug trafficking. Members of Myanmar's military regime have also been implicated in illegal transfers of arms through the country to rebels in Sri Lanka and Northeastern India.

Military Inventory

According to published sources, the Tatmadaw has as many as 25 different small arms in its inventory. These include: 9mm Browning HP (FN 35) semi-automatic pistol; 0.38 inch Smith and Wesson revolver; 0.455 inch Webley revolver; 0.30 inch Winchester M1 and M2 carbines; 0.303 inch SMLE Mark V and Lee Enfield No. 4 rifles; 5.56mm M16A1; 5.56mm Ka Pa Sa MA-1 rifle; 5.56mm Ka Pa Sa MA-2 assault rifle; 7.62mm Heckler and Koch G2; 7.62mm AK-47/Type 56; 7.62mm Heckler and Koch G3; 7.62mm FN FAL; Ka Pa Sa 7.62mm BA-63 (Heckler and Koch G-3A2); Ka Pa Sa BA-100 (Heckler and Koch G-3A3ZF); Ka Pa Sa BA-72 AR (Heckler and Koch G-3K); 9mm Uzi; 9mm Sterling L2-A3; 5.56mm Ka Pa Sa MA-3 Light Machine Gun (LMG); 7.62 Heckler and Koch G4 LMG (also known as the Ka Pa Sa BA64); 0.303 Bren light machine gun; 7.62mm FN MAG General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) and a 7.62mm MG3 GPMG; 0.30 inch Browning M-1919A4 medium machine gun (MMG). Burma uses 40mm M79, M203 and RPK grenade launchers. The

Tatmadaw also reportedly bought a small number of US Armalite AR-10 machine guns and a few units may even have retained old BA52 submachine guns and British 9mm Sten guns in storage.²⁵⁰ Many of these weapons are obsolete by contemporary military standards and are believed to have been passed on for use by the police and village militias rather than the armed forces.²⁵¹

History

According to Andrew Selth, Myanmar has produced its own small arms since the early 1950s. Its efforts began with the manufacture of the World War II-era 9mm TZ45 submachine gun under licence from an Italian firm. The gun was built in a Burma Army Ordnance Workshop near Inya Lake in Rangoon. Italian engineers visited Burma to oversee construction of the factory and the installation of the machinery and by 1953 a slightly modified TZ45 (renamed the BA52 and more commonly referred to as the 'Ne Win Sten') was the standard submachine gun of the Burmese armed forces.²⁵² The gun's simple design made it cheap to produce and easy to maintain, but it frequently misfired and it was not long before the need for a more sophisticated weapon was recognised.

In 1953 the German state-owned firm Fritz Werner Industrie-Ausrustungen GmbH began its on-going association with Burma. Together with another German arms manufacturer, Heckler and Koch, the company agreed to establish a factory to manufacture G3 assault rifles.²⁵³ Production of the G3, renamed the BA63, began in 1957 with financing supplied by the German government.²⁵⁴ A lighter, shorter version of the weapon known as a BA72 was also produced.²⁵⁵ Around the same time Fritz Werner also built a factory near Prome to manufacture 7.62mm and 9mm ammunition. In 1958 Burma signed a \$85.5 million deal with the United States for the supply of arms. The deal was on very favourable terms, essentially allowing Burma to pay in its own soft currency. The transfer was an attempt by the US to influence Rangoon, which had previously rejected US military aid in 1951 for fear of offending China. Framing the deal as a commercial sale also allowed Burma to maintain its stance of strict neutrality.²⁵⁶ More arms and ammunition factories were built during the 1970s, some reportedly with the assistance of engineers from the German Technical Cooperation Agency and in 1984 Fritz Werner entered a partnership with Heavy Industries Corporation of Burma with the aim of building what were believed to be weapons factories.²⁵⁷ By 1988, largely with the help of German expertise, these so-called Ka Pa Sa facilities were producing a range of automatic rifles and light machine guns, grenades, mines and ammunition.²⁵⁸

While Burma was able to meet a wide range of its own defence needs by the 1970s, its factories were still reliant on imported raw materials. This left the government vulnerable to the whims of international suppliers, a fact which became apparent after the violent crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in August 1988. In the aftermath of violence in which thousands were

killed, the US stopped a shipment of ammunition for the *Tatamadaw's* M1 and M2 carbines and M79 grenade launchers. On 18 September 1988 the US imposed an arms embargo and suspended all financial assistance. The West German government, deeply embarrassed by images of Burmese troops indiscriminately firing G3 rifles at unarmed demonstrators, also cut off all aid to Rangoon.²⁵⁹ The EU soon followed with sanctions and in 1991 declared its own formal arms embargo. As a result, the military junta, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) resolved to become self-sufficient and launched a major import substitution program.²⁶⁰

Help to attain greater self-sufficiency was not difficult to find. Official German assistance was suspended, but in 1989 the German government sold its stake in Fritz Werner and the company was free to relaunch its operations in Burma. In 1990 the company reappeared in Burma as a joint venture called Myanmar Fritz Werner Industries Limited, reportedly with a book value of \$8 million. According to Bruce Hawke, Fritz Werner quietly went about resuming exports of what was euphemistically called German 'industrial machinery' to Burma.²⁶¹

Imports since 1988

It takes time and resources to develop an indigenous weapons-production capacity, and while working towards this goal, Myanmar's government has continued to acquire small arms and ammunition from several foreign suppliers. Imports of small arms began flowing in almost immediately after the violence in 1988, despite the informal arms embargo by many Western states. While the military government has used a wide range of foreign suppliers since seizing power, China, Singapore and Pakistan have been especially important.

- China

China has been Myanmar's closest and most generous ally since 1988 and the Sino-Burmese relationship has been cemented with a number of large arms transfers. In mid-1990 the two countries signed an enormous \$1.4 billion deal to deliver military equipment, most of which was made up of large conventional systems, but also some small arms and ammunition. The price tag was huge, but it was widely considered a bargain for the quantity and relative sophistication of the equipment involved. Another \$400 million deal was inked in November 1994.²⁶² This included an estimated 10,000 Chinese Type-56 assault rifles, 40mm RPK grenade launchers, recoilless guns and heavy mortars. Ammunition was also supplied for these weapons along with other miscellaneous military and dual-use materials.²⁶³ The rifles and ammunition alone were worth a reported \$290 million.²⁶⁴ China is also said to have supplied Myanmar with a large quantity of Hongying HN-5 man-portable SAM missiles.²⁶⁵

In exchange for its arms and ammunition, China not only bought goodwill and influence with the junta in Yangon, but also reportedly obtained the right to run a signals intelligence (SIGINT) listening post in the Andaman Sea, from which it can eavesdrop on India's missile program.²⁶⁶ The closeness of the Chinese relationship has caused concern in other parts of South and Southeast Asia, ironically with some additional benefit to the regime. To counter growing Chinese influence, India offered Burma's government a range of weapons, including small arms and light weapons.²⁶⁷ To counter Indian influence, Pakistan has recently stepped up its efforts to supply arms to the junta (see below). Perhaps concerned about its own growing dependence on China, in 1999 Burma declined an offer of \$100 million in military credits.²⁶⁸

As well as supplying arms, China has also encouraged Burma to develop its own production capacity. In 1991, reports in *Far Eastern Economic Review* claimed that Chinese engineers inspected locations near Magwe with the aim of building a factory to produce M21 semi-automatics, M22 assault rifles and M23 light machine guns, as well as 7.62mm ammunition for these weapons.²⁶⁹ The project does not seem to have proceeded, although a factory built with Chinese assistance near Pye does produce Type 58 and Type 59 anti-personnel mines.²⁷⁰ Instead, Burma appears to have relied largely on Singaporean expertise for its own small arms program.

- **Singapore**

If China has been Myanmar's biggest and most visible supplier, Singapore has been a 'silent suitor' - courting the regime, but trying to do so with the lowest possible profile.²⁷¹ Singapore has been involved in Burma since at least late 1988. According to Bertil Lintner, in early October of that year hundreds of boxes marked 'Allied Ordnance, Singapore' were unloaded in Rangoon's port from two vessels belonging to Burma's Five Star Shipping Line. The shipment contained mortars, ammunition, and raw materials for the country's arms factories.²⁷² The shipment also allegedly included 84mm rockets for Myanmar's M2 recoilless rifles made by Chartered Industries of Singapore (CIS). These were purportedly supplied in breach of Singapore's licensing agreement with the Swedish defence manufacturer Forenade Fabriksverken.²⁷³ Swedish Foreign Ministry officials do not deny that the shipment was made, but have said that an investigation into the matter concluded that Singapore had not breached its obligations as a licensee.²⁷⁴

In August 1989 Singapore was again accused of transferring weapons to Burma, apparently with the help of a joint venture company called SKS Marketing, based in Singapore. This time the weapons were alleged to originate in Belgium and Israel and included used 40mm RPG-2 grenade-launchers and Eastern Bloc anti-tank guns, which were possibly captured from Palestinian fighters in southern Lebanon and re-exported by Israel.²⁷⁵ While Singapore has denied any involvement in the transfers, as one writer has noted, '[it] is

highly unlikely that any of these arms shipments ... could have been made without the knowledge and support of the Singapore government'.²⁷⁶ In addition, Singaporean companies are believed to have sold the SLORC Chartered Industries-manufactured M16 automatic rifles and 5.56mm ammunition. If proven, this would be a violation of CIS's licensing arrangement with Colt. These early consignments were apparently paid for by the sale of fishing and logging concessions.²⁷⁷

Perhaps the most controversial sale involving Singapore came in 1998, when *Jane's Defence Weekly* reported that the city-state had transferred an entire modular arms factory to Myanmar. While the transfer has never been confirmed, it is treated as a fact by all the leading analysts of the Burmese military. The factory was allegedly built by Chartered Industries of Singapore, with assistance from consultants belonging to TAAS-Israel Industries.²⁷⁸ It was built, tested, disassembled and then shipped to Yangon in February 1998 aboard the *Sin Ho*, a vessel owned by the Singapore-registered company Lian Huat Co Pte. The cargo weighed 413,341kg and was packaged in several 36m x 12m containers, described in the shipping documents as containing a 'pre-engineered building system'.²⁷⁹ According to documents obtained by *Jane's*, the shipment's notifier was Myanmar Hong Leong Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of a publicly listed Singapore company. The consignee was listed as the Directorate of Defence Industries, Ministry of Defence, which is Myanmar's state-owned arms and ordnance producer.²⁸⁰ Reports suggest the factory may have been reassembled inside the government's arms production complex at Padaung. It is believed to be able to manufacture arms up to 37mm in calibre and is now producing Myanmar's indigenous range of small arms (see below). The Singapore government has consistently denied transferring weapons or arms producing technologies to Myanmar.²⁸¹

- Pakistan

Pakistan has also been a significant small arms supplier to the regime in Yangon since 1988. In January 1989 an official from Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF) reportedly visited Yangon to offer the SLORC arms and ammunition. Shortly afterwards, Burma's Air Force Chief Tin Tun visited Islamabad and arranged to purchase 150 machine guns, 50,000 rounds of ammunition and 5,000 large calibre mortar shells.²⁸² Evidence of POF ordnance subsequently turned up along Burma's border with Thailand. Pakistan later sold Myanmar mortars, rocket launchers, assault rifles and ammunition valued at about \$20 million.²⁸³ Apparently many of these arms were siphoned off from US-supplied weapons intended for the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan.²⁸⁴ While these sales reportedly ceased in 1991 after US pressure, Pakistan continued to sell POF weapons to Burma. By 1995 it was offering training to Myanmar's army and airforce and as part of this defence cooperation arrangement had also sold \$2.5 million in unspecified arms and ammunition.²⁸⁵ These were shipped in

two consignments in March and April 1999. More recently still, Pakistan has indicated a desire to sell more small arms sales to Yangon, partly to offset Indian influence. In January 2001, Pakistan's military leader General Pervez Musharraf visited Yangon where he offered small arms, ammunition and soft loans to the SPDC.²⁸⁶

Other suppliers and transfers

In addition to Burma's big three suppliers, several other countries have been a source of small arms and ammunition for Myanmar. Amongst those often cited are Israel, North Korea, India, Portugal, the former Czechoslovakia, South Africa and South Korea. France, Belgium and Chile have also been accused of arming the junta, although it is difficult to find conclusive evidence for many of these alleged transfers.

Israel has been a reliable source of arms for Burma. Transfers have been motivated largely for commercial reasons but also in an attempt to gain greater influence within ASEAN.²⁸⁷ As well as the consignment of captured Palestinian arms mentioned above, Israel apparently tried to interest the junta in purchasing 9mm Uzi submachine guns in the early 1990s. A visit by Israeli engineers to Yangon in 1991 did not lead to any major sales, but it has been regularly reported that the bodyguards of senior government officials carry Uzis.²⁸⁸ According to Andrew Selth, Israeli officials deny that they sold the regime Uzis and point out that the weapon is manufactured under licence in other countries, including the United States.²⁸⁹ There are also unconfirmed reports that Burma has tried to develop its own version of the Uzi, called the BA94.²⁹⁰ In March 2000 *Jane's Intelligence Review* reported that Myanmar and Israel had signed an agreement for closer military relations.²⁹¹

In 1990, with the help of Thai intermediaries, Burma arranged the purchase of a massive consignment of North Korean ammunition. The shipment of 20 million rounds of 7.62mm ammunition prompted heated speculation among seasoned Burma-watchers, curious why the regime didn't simply buy from its regular supplier — China. Martin Smith has offered one possible answer, suggesting that the weapons were not actually destined for the Tatmadaw, but were instead for the government-aligned United Wa State Army (UWSA) in the Shan state. According to Smith, the Wa's involvement in heroin trafficking, which was officially opposed by Beijing, made buying the ammunition from China awkward.²⁹²

Portugal also transferred mortars and mortar bombs to Burma in the early 1990s, despite the existence of an EU arms embargo.²⁹³ According to Bertil Lintner, the deal was brokered by Singaporean arms dealers who arranged a contract with a private Portuguese firm called either Industrias Nacionias de Defensa EP, or Companhia de Polvoras e Municoes Barcarena SA.²⁹⁴ The Singaporeans did not divulge the final destination of the arms and the

Portuguese government was apparently genuinely embarrassed to later learn it had breached the EU ban. Other rumoured but unconfirmed transfers include small arms and ammunition from Belgium, South Africa, Czechoslovakia, South Korea and mortar ammunition from France. These cannot be verified.

Recent indigenous production efforts

As noted above, since 1988 the military government - since 1996 called the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) - has focused efforts on reducing its dependence on foreign suppliers through a program of import substitution. Specifically, it has sought a replacement for its old G2 and G3 assault rifles which Burmese troops apparently found it heavy and prone to jamming.²⁹⁵ According to *Jane's Intelligence Review*, the import-substitution program is managed by the Ministry of Science and Technology, which shares a facility with Myanmar Fritz Werner Industries in Yangon.²⁹⁶ The army's Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Corps (EMEC) has led the way in designing weapons. By December 1998 EMEC had apparently produced no fewer than 16 prototypes, all but one of which were 5.56mm. These included copies of the Chinese Type 56 rifle, the Israeli Galil, a 5.56mm version of the G3 and a rifle which analysts have referred to as the EMERK-1 (sometimes called the EMER K1 or EMER K.1).

There are conflicting reports about the status of the EMERK-1: it is believed to have been designed in 1995, and was at first thought to be a reverse engineered version of the Austrian Steyr AUG, although some have noted it also resembles the Chinese bullpup assault rifle unveiled during the handover of Hong Kong in 1997.²⁹⁷ Several publications, including *Jane's Defence Weekly*, claim it is available either as a bullpup-styled 5.56mm assault rifle or as a light machine gun.²⁹⁸ They report that both versions are nearly identical, with stamped all-metal bodies and M16-type magazines. Both are 832mm in length although the LMG weighs 500g more at 4.5kg with an empty magazine. (The difference is likely a heavier barrel.) According to these accounts, the weapons have the same effective range and firing rate, given as 400m and 650 rounds per minute respectively.²⁹⁹ It is unclear how widely the EMERK-1 has been issued to troops. Some writers have claimed that the weapon was given to soldiers guarding the Yadana gas pipeline project in the south of the country.³⁰⁰ Other sources say that it has only seen limited use in the field, but that examples have been captured by insurgents in both the Thai and Indian border regions.³⁰¹

Conversely, some commentators have recently raised questions about the status of the EMERK-1 program. Discussing Burma's indigenous weapons program, *Jane's Sentinel-Southeast Asia* notes the existence of a 5.56mm LMG and assault rifle and a 7.62mm LMG, but adds that the 'EMER K.1 seems to have been abandoned'.³⁰² It seems possible that this disagreement is the result of confusing nomenclature. In his assessment of the Burmese order of battle, for

example, Andrew Selth does not refer to the EMERK-1 rifle, but notes the use of the Ka Pa Sa MA-1 5.56mm rifle, a Ka Pa Sa MA-2 5.56mm assault rifle and the Ka Pa Sa MA-3 LMG.³⁰³ It is possible that these may be the new standard names for the EMERK-1 program.

In addition to developing a more advanced small arms production capacity, the Burmese regime has also improved its ability to produce ammunition. The largest armaments complex is a well-guarded facility across the Irawaddy River from the town of Prome. It includes factories making 5.56mm, 7.62mm, and 9mm ammunition at Htonebo, Padaung and Nyaung Chidauk. (According to *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Burma has been making 5.56mm ammunition since at least 1996.) Another facility is located at Malun, west of the Irawaddy near Magwe and there are others at Inndaing (Intaing) in Pegu district and another near Mandalay.³⁰⁴ In addition to small calibre ammunition, it is likely that technology transfers in recent years has given Myanmar the ability produce 51mm, 60mm, 81mm and 120mm mortar bombs, hand grenades, 41mm and 51mm rifle-launched grenades and 'probably' grenades for its 40mm grenade launchers.³⁰⁵

Licit arms transfers

Myanmar's small arms production to date has been with the goal of meeting its own considerable domestic needs. There have been no recorded instances of weapons sales or transfers, and although one 1998 report suggested that the government had the long-term goal of exporting ordnance and small arms for foreign exchange, no evidence to support this claim was offered.³⁰⁶ Given the intense international scrutiny to which the regime is subjected, it is reasonable to assume that news of any transfers would quickly surface. For the time being therefore it appears that Myanmar's government is not an exporter of small arms or ammunition.

Small arms and non-state actors

Myanmar is home to numerous long-running insurgencies along its northern, eastern and western borders.³⁰⁷ The rebel groups involved in these conflicts vary in motivation, numbers, resources and military strength, but they all rely almost exclusively on small arms such as assault rifles, light machine guns, RPGs, and mortar mortars.³⁰⁸ While in the past some groups have had their own limited production capacity, most of their weapons are acquired through illicit transfers, including covert supplies from governments such as Thailand and India.³⁰⁹

In addition to these rebel groups, Myanmar is host to several sub-state actors allied with the government in Yangon that also possess impressive military arsenals.³¹⁰ The most important of these, the United Wa State Army (UWSA), is a military power in its own right. The Wa effectively control the north-eastern

Shan state and are massive producers and exporters of narcotics. UWSA operations take place with the tacit approval of the government, which views it as a useful buffer force between Thailand and Myanmar.

The following brief survey is not intended to be a detailed description of the reasons for the various intra-state conflicts in Myanmar, but rather outlines some of the principal rebel groups involved, their small arms holdings and the source of their weapons.³¹¹

Thai border region

- **Karenni Army (KA)**

The military wing of the Karenni movement, the Karenni Army (KA) was founded in 1974. It is seeking to establish an independent status for the ethnically Karenni states of Bawlake, Kyebogyi and Kantarwady. At one time the KA had a ceasefire agreement with the Myanmar regime, although this is no longer in force. Little is known about the command structure of the KA beyond that it is led by Bee Htoo and is believed to have a total membership of fewer than 1000 guerrillas. According to Jane's *Sentinel*, the KA is lightly armed with rifles, handguns and a few machine guns. The principal source of these weapons is smuggling across the border from Thailand, as well as trading with other Burmese rebel forces.

- **Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)**

The KNLA is the military wing of the Karen National Union (KNU) which has been fighting for a Karen homeland in Burma for more than five decades. It is armed with many of the weapons that are standard equipment for rebel groups in the region: assault rifles, light machine guns, mortars and RPGs. News reports seem to suggest the KNLA relies on a miscellany of rifles including AK47s (including the Chinese Type 56 assault rifle), AR15s, M16s, HK33s, SKS rifles, G3s and G4s.³¹² During the 1990s, many of these were smuggled to Burma from the Thai-Cambodia border where they had been sold by Khmer Rouge and Cambodian military forces.

In recent years the Karen movement has weakened and suffered several major military defeats, the most important being the capture of its headquarters at Manerplaw in January 1995. The KNLA's 4th Brigade headquarters in Minthamase, opposite the Thai province of Kathanaburi, also fell to the Burmese military in 1997. The Tatmadaw was aided in this cause by the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), former members of the KNU who had broken away to sign a ceasefire with the government.³¹³ According to Yangon, KNU members have also surrendered under the Burmese government's 'weapons for peace' program.³¹⁴

Despite these setbacks, the KNU has not collapsed as a military force. In November 2000 it achieved one of its most significant victories in recent times,

when a group of KNLA troops armed with assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine guns and 81mm mortars captured a Tatmadaw military camp at Tojo Mountain near the Thai border. The victory not only boosted KNU morale, it also yielded a cache of abandoned arms and ammunition. According to an Associated Press reporter present during the operation, KNU troops seized 'thousands of assault rifle rounds and dozens of rocket propelled grenades'.³¹⁵

As well as battlefield gains, the KNLA continues to obtain smuggled weapons from Thailand. Many of these arms originate in Cambodia and are moved with the assistance of corrupt or sympathetic Thai security personnel.³¹⁶ Arms often move to the Karen forces through refugee camps along the border.³¹⁷ Often these are stored in large caches along the border region for later use. Seizures of arms shipments to the Karen in Thailand are relatively common but many are small and thought to be just a fraction of the total transfers.³¹⁸

There are also persistent but unconfirmed rumours that the Thai government is covertly supplying the KNLA, along with other groups fighting Yangon. In June 2000, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, citing Thai intelligence officials, reported that that former members of the British Special Air Service (SAS) have been recruited to train Karen fighters. No other details have emerged.

- **United Wa State Army (UWSA)**

The United Wa State Army is the successor to the Burmese Communist Party (BCP) which collapsed after internal squabbles in 1989. When the BCP leadership fled into exile, the UWSA inherited its large arsenal of Chinese-made small arms and became one of several rebel groups to sign a ceasefire agreement with the government. The peace deal was reportedly offered in exchange for the Wa's right to keep their arms and to produce and sell narcotics unhindered by Yangon.³¹⁹ The UWSA has been closely linked to one of the top generals in the junta, intelligence chief and SPDC Secretary One Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt, and its fighters work with the Tatmadaw in parts of the border area with Thailand.³²⁰

The UWSA is one of the richest non-state militaries in Southeast Asia and Thai intelligence officials have described the group as 'Asia's first effective drug cartel'.³²¹ Its drug operations are based in 50 factories just across the Thai border. These have produced an estimated 600 million methamphetamine pills that have flooded Thailand in the past few years.³²² In 1996, following the surrender of Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army, the UWSA took over several key border towns previously controlled by the Shan and expanded its drug operations. It is presently estimated to have between 12 and 20,000 troops.³²³

As well as spending one billion baht developing a base at Yong Mawn, the Wa have invested profits from their drug trafficking activities in upgrading their military capabilities.³²⁴ In July 2000, the UWSA announced through its

network of agents along the Thai and Lao borders that it was prepared to pay up to 10,000 baht (\$250) for an assault rifle in good condition, either an AK47 or an M16.³²⁵ Most of these weapons come from Thai government arsenals or are smuggled through Thailand from Cambodia. It is an open secret that the cross border trade would not be possible without the complicity of corrupt members of the Thai and Burmese military, border officials and police. In one recent example, two members of the Thai police ordnance division were arrested in connection with the attempted theft of 20,000 rounds of 5.56mm ammunition from a government arsenal. Along with two other suspects, a former police officer and a former soldier, they had links to the UWSA.³²⁶

But in addition to smuggled arms, there are also unconfirmed rumours that the Wa deals directly with major Chinese arms producers like Norinco. According to sources in Bangkok, not only does the Wa buy from Norinco to meet its own needs, it also sells on weapons to other insurgents (apart from its bitter rivals, the Shan State Army) for profit.³²⁷ Some reports suggest that China is supplying the Wa with the aim of pushing their drug peddling operation south, away from the Chinese border.³²⁸ Other analysts have mentioned the government in Yangon as an important conduit for Wa small arms, for example the North Korean ammunition shipment mentioned above. The relationship between the UWSA and Yangon is complex, however. One explanation sometimes given for the Wa's recent arms expenditure is their fear that any shift in the balance of power within the SPDC — for example the fall of Khin Nyunt — could lead to the collapse of their ceasefire agreement. The Tatmadaw has also been accused by the Wa of trying to smuggle arms into Wa territory for use in future operations against the group.

- Shan State Army (SSA)

The Shan State Army is the sole remnant of the Shan forces that signed a peace agreement with the Burmese government in 1989. It was also affiliated with Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army which officially surrendered in 1996. The SSA continues to have some former MTA members within its ranks. Its goal is to create an independent Shan State.

The SSA is predominantly armed with assault rifles, explosives and light machine guns. In addition to weapons captured from the Tatmadaw, most of these are bought illicitly from Thailand, Laos and southern China. There have also been rumours of covert supplies of weapons from the Thai government. These reports have become more credible as the SSA has taken on a bigger role fighting the drug trafficking activities of the pro-Yangon United Wa State Army. Despite its own extensive involvement in narcotics in the past, the SSA has seemingly been co-opted into the Thai government's strategy of fighting Wa smuggling.³²⁹ In April 2000, Thai deputy Foreign Minister Sukhumbhand Paribatra admitted that Thailand was supporting clandestine sabotage operations in Wa-controlled territory inside Burma.³³⁰ The SSA was believed to be

receiving Thai support, particular after UWSA and Tatmadaw forces launched a coordinated offensive against the group early in 2001.

India and Bangladesh border region

There are several groups fighting the Burmese government using bases along the borders with India and Bangladesh. The weapons traffic in this region is two-way, as rebels in the Indian states of Mizoram and Manipur and in Bangladesh also buy and sell weapons across the border. Groups like the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and the People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) source weapons from inside Burma, sometimes in exchange for drugs or the chemical precursors needed for their manufacture.³³¹ A consignment from Cambodia destined for ULFA intercepted by authorities in the mid-1990s contained 775 AK56 assault rifles, 65 GPMGs, 10 RPGs 100 anti-tank weapons, 50 pistols and thousands of rounds of rifle ammunition.³³² The small Indian border town of Morea has been identified as one important centre for the exchange of weapons and drug-related products.³³³ Weapons are also apparently transferred out of the region to the Tamil Tigers.³³⁴

In Burma's Arakan State, insurgent groups include the Arakan Liberation Army, Arakan Army, Arakan People's Army, Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front, Rohingya Army and Rohingya National Army. These are generally equipped with AK47s and other rifles and explosives smuggled across the border from Bangladesh. Many of the weapons originate in Cambodia and come by sea via Thailand and the Bangladeshi port of Cox's Bazaar. According to an Agence France Presse report, one shipment landed at the port in December 2000 was supposedly worth some \$80,000. Comprised of AK47s, AK56s, M16s, mortars, 40mm rocket launchers as well as pistols and 'Chinese-made explosives and hand grenades', it was believed to have come from Cambodia.³³⁵

Another shipment was intercepted by Indian navy vessels off Port Blair en route to the Burma-Bangladesh border in 1998.³³⁶ As well as arms, ammunition and explosives, the two boats involved were carrying 50 kilograms of heroin. After further investigation, it was discovered that the navy had inadvertently exposed an Indian intelligence operation smuggling arms to rebels in the Arakan and Chin states. India's external intelligence service, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) had facilitated the purchase of the weapons in Cambodia and arranged for them to be smuggled to the Chin and Arakan insurgents on Thai-crewed trawlers.³³⁷ News of the shipments infuriated the Indian army, which argued that a large proportion of the Indian weapons were finding their way back across the border to secessionist groups they were fighting. The Burmese rebels were believed to be selling surplus weapons to the Indian separatists.³³⁸

Philippines

The Philippines is a heavily armed society, with a level of civilian gun ownership close to that of the United States.³³⁹ It also has a large domestic gun industry, both legal and illegal. In the past illegally produced weapons have generally been of low quality, but some are increasingly being made close to military specifications and have been linked to criminal groups and insurgents, both inside the Philippines and overseas. Transfers of Filipino weapons have been reported to groups in the Maluku islands of Indonesia, although the scale of the smuggling is difficult to calculate. Transfers to the Philippines' several insurgent groups are also a major problem and involve not just leakage and black market sales, but also covert grey market supplies from several Middle Eastern states. Gun violence is a problem and there is a strong gun lobby in Philippines politics as well as an increasingly vocal gun control constituency.

History

The United States has historically been the most important supplier of military weapons to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The AFP was created by the US in 1936 and after the World War II it inherited the American arms and ammunition already in the islands. The US continued its influence after independence through a Military Assistance Agreement (MAA) with the Philippines government, which ensured the provision of US equipment and advisers and which also prevented the Philippines from purchasing arms from third parties without US consent. Not surprisingly, from 1950 to 1970, the percentage of total Filipino arms provided by the United States never slipped below 75 per cent.³⁴⁰ Of all the ASEAN states, by 1985 the Philippines was the most heavily dependent on a single foreign arms supplier.

Occasionally non-American weapons were acquired, such as the ubiquitous German G3 and the Israeli Uzi submachine gun and Galil assault rifle, but generally US small arms dominated the Philippines' imports. During the 1970s the US sold the Philippines government more than 45,000 M16A1 rifles and later sold the rights for licensed production of the M16 to the Elisco Tools Company (see below).³⁴¹ It also sold it some 3000 M203 grenade launchers. American transfers continue to the present day, often at bargain basement prices. In 1994 and 1995 alone the US gifted 22,500 M16A1s, 16,448 M1911A1 pistols, 3,638 M14 rifles and 10 M240 machine guns to the Philippines government.³⁴²

Military inventory

The AFP's current small arms inventory includes the 9mm FN-35, 9mm GLOCK, and 9mm M1911A1 pistols; 9mm Uzi and the World War II-era .45 M3A1 submachine guns; 5.56mm M16A1 and Galil assault rifles; 7.62mm M14 and G3 rifles; Singapore's 5.56mm Ultimex 100 light machine gun and 7.62mm

M60 and FN MAG machine guns. The Philippines military uses American M79 and M203 grenade launchers.

The AFP is currently in the midst of a modernisation plan. Under the latest revised plan, the army will reduce its size from 65,000 men to 50,000 over a 15-year period and its eight infantry divisions will be restructured into three, organised as rapid reaction brigades. As part of this transition, the army is acquiring badly needed new equipment, including infantry weapons. Plans for a new assault rifle to replace the aging M16A1 have been mooted, as has the need for more section assault weapons (such as a light machine gun).³⁴³ Given the Philippines' budgetary difficulties and more pressing defence needs, this acquisition will likely have to wait until sufficient new funding becomes available.³⁴⁴

Domestic production

There has been an interest in the domestic production of small arms, ammunition and munitions in the Philippines since at least 1917. A series of measures was proposed for the creation of a local arms industry prior to independence, but all failed to pass until the enactment of the 1957 Republic Act. This declared that it was government policy 'to achieve within a reasonable time self-sufficiency in small arms, mortars, and other weapons, ammunitions for these weapons, and other munitions for the use of the military establishment'.³⁴⁵ It also mandated the creation of a government arsenal for the purpose.³⁴⁶ The result was the establishment of a state-run arsenal in Camp General Antonio Luna, 150km from Manila, although ground was not broken at the site until 1967.

The imaginatively named Government Arsenal (GA) produced its first small arms cartridge in August 1971. Three years later integrated small arms ammunition production began, with all the components – case, primer, propellant powder and bullet assembled into a complete cartridge – manufactured in the arsenal.³⁴⁷ By 1985 GA produced 'most of the small arms ammunition' required by the AFP.³⁴⁸ This included .30 calibre rounds for the old M1 Garands and carbines, .45mm pistol ammunition, .50 calibre ball and 7.62mm and 5.56mm ammunition.³⁴⁹

The Philippines' domestic production was given another boost under the Marcos dictatorship. The declaration of martial law in September 1972 was followed by a surge in activity from insurgent groups like the New People's Army (NPA) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Marcos responded by increasing the size of the AFP from 62,000 troops to about 160,000 by 1986.³⁵⁰ These soldiers needed to be equipped and from November 1972 on, greater emphasis was put on outfitting them from local sources. In early 1974 this was formalised when Presidential Decree 415 launched the Self-Reliant Defence Posture Program (SRDP).³⁵¹ Among the projects to be given priority were the production of small arms and ammunition. A number of private

companies were 'confiscated' by the government to achieve this end, including the Elizalde group. In 1974 an Elizalde subsidiary, the Elisco Tool Manufacturing Company, was given the task of producing 150,000 M16s (Models 613 and 653P) under licence from Colt.³⁵² A turnkey plant for the purpose was provided by Colt and actual production began in 1982. The contract was subsequently extended for another 60,000 rifles. These M16A1s remain the standard infantry weapon of the AFP.

Other SRDP projects involving small arms and light weapons included mortar production (the manufacture of 81mm mortar tubes began in 1974 and 60mm tubes in 1977); a MKII hand grenade was produced by 1978; and 5.56mm ammunition began to be produced by Government Arsenal in 1983. M16 rifle production was also accompanied by the manufacturing of various accessories, for example, a company called El Oro made M16 bayonets.³⁵³

Several other local producers were involved in the manufacture of small arms under the SRDP. They included:³⁵⁴

- A.V. Andres Construction Industrial Corporation (Avacorp) produced a rifle grenade for the SRDP. The 40mm grenade was based on a local design and used both live and blank ammunition. It was designed to be fired from an M16, presumably using a standard US M203 grenade launcher. The initial contract was for 385,000 rounds and by 1987 the company had delivered 335,912 rounds. Avacorp was also contracted to produce 1.5 million rounds of ammunition for the M79 grenade launcher. By 1988 it had only delivered 29,860 grenades.
- S.A. Cortes Manufacturing Corporation produced barrels for the old American-supplied M1, M2 and M14 rifles, as well as a .30 calibre machine gun barrel.
- Government Arsenal produced a variety of rifles and small arms ammunition, mostly based on US designs and technology. It also produced the German G3 rifle under licence from Heckler and Koch. Government Arsenal produced 60mm and 81mm mortars based on the US M-19 and M-29 models.
- Dayton Metals developed a 60mm mortar bomb, with a range of 950m, apparently without any technology transfer. Originally contracted to supply 375,000 rounds to the AFP, by 1988 Dayton had delivered 300,000. Hannah Corporation was allocated responsibility for the development of pyrotechnics under the SRDP. It produces a range of white, green and red flares. An original contract for 80,000 units was signed with the AFP.
- Creative Self-Reliance Enterprises Ltd: As part of the indigenous mortar production project, Creative Self-Reliance developed a point-detonating, delayed-arming fuse for use with 60mm and 81mm mortars. The total contract volume was for 340450 fuses.

Production today

Government Arsenal: Today, Government Arsenal (GA) retains its role as the major supplier of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippines National Police (PNP). Under government regulations enacted in April 2000, GA is charged with developing 'capabilities to enhance self-sufficiency in the country's defence requirements. Towards this end, the Government Arsenal shall be effectively used in the production of basic weapons, ammunitions and other munitions for the use of the AFP and Philippine National Police.'³⁵⁵ GA's mandate further allows it to use its production facilities to arrange joint ventures, co-production or similar arrangements with 'local and foreign entities'.³⁵⁶

GA is keen to find an export market for Philippines-made arms. It apparently explored the possibilities for exports in the 1980s, but was blocked by existing laws. Under the 1995 Republic Act No.7898 and the regulations described above, however, GA is permitted to export arms produced 'in excess of AFP and PNP requirements'. The arsenal's management describes these changes to the law as 'fortuitous'.³⁵⁷

GA currently manufactures seven types of ammunition for the AFP and PNP on two production lines: one for rifle rounds (the *Gatlo* line) and one for pistol rounds (the *Gapat-Gabin* line). The ammunition types are 5.56mm (M193), .30 calibre M1 and carbine; .30 calibre M2; 7.62mm M80; .45 calibre M1911; .38 Special; and 9mm parabellum.³⁵⁸ According to its annual report, in production year 2000 Government Arsenal produced a total of 17.52 million rounds of small arms ammunition.³⁵⁹

GA is currently planning a modernisation program, dependent on the Philippines government's approval of funds. (There have also been reports that GA may be privatised to permit the improving of its equipment.) Specific plans include the upgrading of the 5.56mm and 7.62mm ammunition lines and the establishment of a nitration plant to give the Philippines its first local source of military grade nitrocellulose (NC).³⁶⁰

Private production

As well as a state-run armoury, the Philippines has a very large private arms industry. One of the biggest players in the private sector is the Arms Corporation of the Philippines (ARMSCOR), the self-described 'largest arms manufacturer in Southeast Asia'.³⁶¹ ARMSCOR produces weapons and ammunition for both the government and for the local gun market in a factory in Parang, Marikina City.

According to its promotional materials, the company currently manufactures a range of pistols, revolvers, bolt-action rifles, shotguns, semi-automatic and assault rifles as well as an extensive selection of ammunition. Among

these weapons are the MAK and the M1600 assault rifles, which the company describes as 'exact replicas' of the M16 and AK47.³⁶² The weapons are not replicas, however, as they are chambered in less expensive and less powerful .22 LR High Velocity ammunition. In addition, ARMSCOR produces 11 different bolt-action rifles (all .22 calibre); four .38 special revolvers; four semi-automatic rifles, which it claims are designed for the 'satisfaction of semi-auto target shooting enthusiasts'; and a selection of M1911-A1 pistols in .40, .45 and 9mm calibres.³⁶³

ARMSCOR has also signed an agreement with the South African firm Denel to produce the 9mm Vektor SP-1 pistol under licence.³⁶⁴ According to industry reports, ARMSCOR will initially manufacture 10,000 weapons for the Philippines National Police (PNP) and will also sell the pistol commercially on the large Philippines domestic gun market.³⁶⁵ According to the company's website, ARMSCOR is also developing several pistols in its M1911 range that are not yet available for sale.³⁶⁶

In terms of ammunition production, ARMSCOR produces a wide range of calibres. Company materials claim to produce .30 calibre M1 and 5.56mm (M193) ammunition, as well as .223 and .222 REM rounds. It also produces a large range of .22 ammunition and unprimed cartridges in .38, .357, 9mm, .40, .45, 5.56mm and .30 calibres.³⁶⁷ The company claims to have exported its products to more than 22 countries, although no further details are available. It maintains an interest in exports, however, and has an International Marketing Director, and an office for a subsidiary, ARMSCOR Precision Inc., based in Las Vegas.³⁶⁸

In addition to ARMSCOR, there are many smaller firearms manufacturers throughout the Philippines. These include Shooters Arms Manufacturing Incorporated, Stronghand Incorporated and PB Dionisio & Co.³⁶⁹ According to the PNP's Firearms and Explosives Division (FED), in April 1998 there were 45 legal manufacturers of small arms, 522 authorised dealers and 133 gun repair shops in the country.³⁷⁰ The largest concentration of these producers is around Danao City and Mandaue City in the Visayas, where arms production has been a way of life for decades. In Danao, there are estimated to be 3000 gunsmiths at work and as many as 25,000 people are believed to rely on the gun trade for their livelihood.³⁷¹

There are two major licensed producers in Danao: the Danao Arms Corporation (DAMCOR) and the Workers League of Danao Multi-Purpose Cooperative (WORLD-MPC). Under a licensing agreement signed by the Chief of the PNP, these two manufacturers are authorised to produce a total of 6,000 assorted firearms annually. They are believed to be in dire financial straits, however, and there are fears that if they collapse, many of their employees will return to illegal production.³⁷²

With such extensive domestic production, it is not surprising that the Philippines has problems controlling the spread of small arms. Indeed, it is difficult even to get an accurate picture of how many guns are circulating in the country. There are currently between 600,000 and 700,000 guns registered with the Philippines National Police (PNP).³⁷³ In addition, there are estimated to be somewhere between 270,000 and 600,000 unregistered weapons in circulation.³⁷⁴ A Philippines Center for Transnational Crime report, citing the PNP's Firearms and Explosives Division (FED), comes up with a figure closer to 350,000 unregistered guns, dividing the total into 189,766 'un-re-registered,' weapons, 2,156 firearms that are 'lost' and 157,860 weapons simply designated as 'loose'.³⁷⁵ The annual output of the country's gun industry means these totals are constantly increasing. According to the PNP, more than 65,000 new guns are registered every year. Doubtless, countless more are not registered. With so many guns being legally produced and owned, it is little wonder that many slip into the hands of criminals and insurgent groups active in the country.

Illegal and 'paltik' production

In addition to a large legal arms industry, the Philippines is home to a significant number of illicit producers. Many of these are also based around Danao and Mandaue City. Much of the production involves 'paltik' or homemade weapons and takes place in backyards or small primitive factories. According to some sources, many of these producers would like to be legally registered and properly authorised to produce arms, but are unable to get approval due to bureaucratic obstacles.³⁷⁶

Many paltik weapons are literally hand-made, often crafted from pipes, steel bars, even old car parts.³⁷⁷ Some of the more sophisticated examples are chromed and even engraved with fake American markings.³⁷⁸ The work is incredibly time-consuming, taking three days to produce a simple shotgun and as long as three weeks to make a handgun. Even making a hammer for a .38 pistol can take 8 hours' work.³⁷⁹ While the guns are often of low quality and frequently more dangerous to the user than the intended target, some higher quality copies of military-style weapons are becoming available. A report in *Asiaweek* magazine in 1996 mentioned the availability of a locally made sub-machine gun and referred to a gunsmith who had made his own hybrid military weapon based on the Armalite, Ingram and M16 rifles.³⁸⁰ A more recent BBC report claimed that automatic weapons are available in Danao, with a submachine gun costing as little as \$375.³⁸¹

There are paltik sales elsewhere in the Philippines as well. Business in the city of Santa Cruz is brisk, with reports claiming that gunmakers cannot meet the rising demand.³⁸² According to a *Philippine Daily Inquirer* report in August 2000, despite the increased demand, prices of firearms were remaining steady.

A revolver cost between P1000 and P1900 (\$20-30), while a .45 handgun cost P10000. Shotguns ranged from P4000 to P6000 depending on their quality.³⁸³ The widespread illegal production of sidearms has also been reported in Mindanao. According to Merliza Makinano and Alfredo Lubang, unlicensed copies of .38 and .45 calibre pistols are made in Western Mindanao and Zamboanga. Prices in Mindanao include P25000 for a 9mm pistol, P24000 for a .45 calibre handgun. A genuine M16 costs P26000.³⁸⁴

Illicit transfers

The Philippines has a serious problem with the illicit movement of small arms. Many of the arms illegally produced in Danao have reportedly found their way into the hands of insurgent groups and criminal gangs, including Taiwanese and Japanese crime syndicates.³⁸⁵ Until the late 1980s, the Yakuza used to buy arms directly from Danao, but crime syndicates now use middlemen.³⁸⁶ In what is a highly organised process, agents collect finished products from a variety of small producers and consolidate the weapons on pre-designated 'bodegas' for shipment to Japan. Important exit points include Batangas, Ilocos Sur and other northern parts of the country.³⁸⁷ In the southern Philippines, gunrunners are especially active in Agusan, Misamis, Surigao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga provinces.³⁸⁸ According to Philippines diplomats, Japanese gangs now also import Filipino gunmakers rather than just simply their products.³⁸⁹

There are also reports that Filipino weapons have been smuggled to Muslim forces in the Maluku. In January 2000, the Indonesian newspaper *Suara Merdeka* reported claims that a helicopter had airlifted a shipment of weapons from Davao to Ambon with the tacit approval of the Indonesian military. No evidence was provided to support this allegation, which was strongly denied by Indonesian forces.³⁹⁰ A more likely route for smuggling is by sea. According to Indonesian military commanders, Filipino weapons purchased in Mindanao are freely traded in Maluku.³⁹¹ A number of weapons have been seized on passenger boats travelling from the Philippines and the Indonesian Navy has intercepted some small craft carrying arms. In July 2000, three ships loaded with unspecified weaponry were stopped en route from the Philippines to Halmahera and Ternate in North Maluku.³⁹² In January 2001, the navy intercepted what it described as a Filipino 'traditional vessel' destined for the Maluku carrying six guns and 454 bullets. The guns were World War II vintage.³⁹³

Insurgent groups

The Philippines is home to several long-running insurgencies, particularly in the south of the country. Prominent rebel groups include the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), the New People's Army

(NPA) and the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB).³⁹⁴ These groups vary in terms of political agenda, numbers and military strength but they all rely almost exclusively on small arms, although there are reports that the MILF and Abu Sayyaf have been trying to buy heavy weapons.³⁹⁵ Typically, rebel inventories include assault rifles, M203 grenade launchers, light machine guns, RPGs and light mortars.³⁹⁶ According to one writer who spent time with the MILF's military wing — the Bangamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) — they are armed with the M14 or M16 rifle, with 'a sprinkling of M1 Garands' in evidence. At section level, the BIAF uses the M60 GPMG as well as M79 grenade launchers and locally made RPG-2s (see below).³⁹⁷ Philippines intelligence sources estimate that as of June 2001, Abu Sayyaf had 640 men with 208 firearms in Jolo, and 464 men with 177 firearms in Basilan.³⁹⁸ In addition to politically-motivated groups, there are also several private armies affiliated with Filipino organised crime figures that possess impressive military arsenals.³⁹⁹

While some insurgent groups have their own limited production capacity, most weapons are bought, stolen or captured from Philippines security personnel. Some weapons also reportedly come through covert channels from governments in the Middle East, although it is difficult to get firm evidence to support these claims. Philippines rebel groups are some of the better equipped and better funded in Southeast Asia. Groups like Abu Sayyaf are able to pay high prices for weapons on the black market, thanks to a successful campaign of hostage-taking during 2000.⁴⁰⁰ According to Peter Chalk, the MILF and Abu Sayyaf are known to have purchased sizeable quantities of arms through dealers in Phuket and Ranong in Thailand, most of which have been smuggled back to Mindanao through Sabah.⁴⁰¹ The group has also obtained weapons in direct swaps for hostages and is also rumoured to be involved in the illegal drug trade.⁴⁰²

Production by rebel groups

According to reports in 1999, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has built an arms factory in central Mindanao.⁴⁰³ An MILF spokesman, Ustadz Shariff Mohsin Julabbi, told the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* that the factory had 97 employees and produced high-calibre weapons and ammunition, including a replica of the Russian RPG-2 grenade launcher, 60mm mortars, as well as unspecified 'bullets and bombs'.⁴⁰⁴ He claimed the factory could produce almost 200 RPG-2s a month and said that the MILF had about 1500 of the weapons in its inventory. A more senior MILF figure, Ghadzali Jaafar, later confirmed the existence of the factory and said as well as producing RPG-2s, .45 calibre pistols and 60mm mortars, it also converted M1 rifles into fully automatic M14s.⁴⁰⁵

Grey market transfers

Another important source of illicit weapons for Filipino insurgents is the Middle East. In the past there have been persistent reports connecting groups in Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, Sudan and Libya to Islamic rebels in the Southern Philippines.⁴⁰⁶ Libya is believed to have been active in the country for decades and President Qaddafi once publicly declared he had sent arms and funds to Muslim dissidents in Mindanao.⁴⁰⁷ Members of Abu Sayyaf trained in Libya and Tripoli reportedly facilitated the transfer of large numbers of Pakistani-made RPG-7s, HK33s and MP5s to the MILF in the southern Philippines, at one time using financing from the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI).⁴⁰⁸ According to former Filipino National Security Adviser Jose Almonte, Libyan support to the MNLF was so generous, there was a time during the early 1970s that 'the secessionists were better armed than the forces of the Philippine state'.⁴⁰⁹

Saudi involvement has also been mentioned. In June 2000 a container of 2000 M60 machine gun rounds was seized in Manila North Harbour, shortly before the cargo was to be loaded onto a boat to Mindanao. The box was marked with labels indicating it had come from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Police said they believed the bullets were destined for the MILF.⁴¹⁰ More recently, the Saudi terrorist Osama Bin Laden has also been linked to Filipino rebels, including the MILF and Abu Sayyaf.⁴¹¹ The *Manila Bulletin* newspaper reported that in 1999 the MILF ordered a shipment of 3000 assorted high-power firearms (presumably AK47 variants) and tens of thousands of rounds of ammunition from Afghanistan.⁴¹² According to a former member of Abu Sayyaf, a Philippines-based Islamic welfare organisation known as the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO) is the primary conduit for channelling funds from Bin Laden to Abu Sayyaf.⁴¹³ A Philippines government intelligence report stated that the IIRO is 'utilised by foreign extremists as a pipeline through which funding for the local extremists are being coursed through (sic)'.⁴¹⁴ Some scepticism about these claims may be warranted. Even before the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, one commentator noted that Bin Laden was a useful name for the Philippine government to mention in order to 'stir fear and loathing in the West'.⁴¹⁵

Apart from the Islamic connection, North Korea, China and Vietnam have also been mentioned as suppliers of illegal arms to groups in the Philippines.⁴¹⁶ According to Filipino intelligence reports, in May 2000 officials from the MILF reportedly met with a North Korean to discuss the purchase of anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, using \$3 million allegedly received from Bin Laden. The deal was allegedly brokered by a Malaysian arms dealer named Samuan Bin Akmad.⁴¹⁷ Intelligence officials say they doubt the shipment took place, although there were sketchy press reports of a possible North Korean presence in an Abu Sayyaf camp in Sulu in August 2000.⁴¹⁸ These reports were much too

vague to be considered authoritative, but there was high-level concern in the Philippines about DPRK shipments, although these were played down when Manila established diplomatic ties with Pyongyang as part of North Korea's entry into the ASEAN Regional Forum.⁴¹⁹ China has been accused of supplying arms to the RPA-ABB terrorist cell, a charge both the Chinese government and the group itself dispute.

Leakage

If rumours of transfers from the Islamic world and Asian neighbours have captured headlines, insurgent groups have been open in admitting that their biggest source of weapons is actually the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippines National Police (PNP).⁴²⁰ These are usually weapons that are stolen, lost or captured during combat, but there are also reported incidents of AFP troops simply selling their weapons.⁴²¹

Rebel groups have also been known to raid AFP arms depots, municipal armouries and have even seized small arms from civilian competitors in shooting competitions.⁴²² These operations are usually carefully planned and the rebels often wield more firepower than the unfortunate defenders. For example, in September 2000 a force of 200 New People's Army (NPA) fighters attacked a police station and an army detachment in Northern Samar, making off with four M16 rifles, revolvers and pistols.⁴²³ Sometimes the raids are executed with the help of AFP soldiers. In January 1998 communist rebels raided an army depot in Misamis Oriental guarded by a single sentry from the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU). He allowed them into the armoury where they took five M14 rifles, 17 M1 Garands and an M60 machine gun.⁴²⁴ Both he and his chief subsequently disappeared, leading investigators to suspect that they may have been collaborators.

Another police raid in September 2000 netted ten men in Bulacan and Nueva Ecija provinces along with a shipment of high-powered military firearms and crew-served weapons. The weapons, including various assault rifles (M16s and Belgian FN-FALs), grenade launchers, machine guns, mortars, explosives and ammunition, were destined for an unspecified rebel group in Mindanao.⁴²⁵ According to officials from the Presidential Anti-Organised Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) an official connection to the smuggler was certain, as 'most of the weapons [could] only be found in the government's armory'.⁴²⁶ Police officers have also been accused of reselling illegal weapons that they capture or confiscate. One Manila businessman quoted in *The Straits Times* claimed that the practice was worth more than 100 million pesos annually to the PNP.⁴²⁷

Private security firms have also been implicated in the movement of weapons. In October 2000, employees of the Mindanao security firm, Anflocor, were charged with illegally transporting arms to a plantation owned by the family of a prominent Davao del Norte politician, Antonio Floerendo, Jr. The weapons

included more than a dozen M16s, rifle grenades, hand grenades, .38 pistols, an unspecified grenade launcher and ammunition. According to police, the .38 calibre pistols were made in an illegal arms factory.⁴²⁸

In addition, corruption among officials and members of the country's leading families is endemic. Many have links to organised crime or insurgent groups and consequently the movement of illegal small arms. A July 2000 raid on the home of the former mayor of Sulu uncovered a cache of handguns, assault rifles (M16s and a Galil), grenade launchers, a machine gun and ammunition and grenades.⁴²⁹ In August 2000 members of Cebu's prominent Anzar family were charged with illegal possession of more than 50 firearms, including M16s, a grenade launcher and a host of sidearms.⁴³⁰

Gun control and disarmament

As noted above, the Philippines has an extremely high level of gun ownership. Its weapons culture is deep-rooted and guns are commonly seen in public. Gun-wielding security guards stand outside banks and shops and the concealed carrying of weapons is common.⁴³¹ Each year Christmas and New Year are marred by deaths caused by 'celebratory' gunfire and national elections send murder rates soaring.⁴³² In the past, licensing of civilian weapons has been notoriously slack, with gun permits sold by corrupt officials and handed out by the police. This practice was widely condemned by gun control organisations such as the NGO Gunless Society, but to little avail.⁴³³ Lobby groups like the gun owners' organisation PRO-GUN were more influential with Filipino politicians.⁴³⁴

In November 1999 the new Chief of the PNP, Panfilo Lacson, announced a crackdown on illegal possession of weapons. In addition to severe penalties for illegal gun ownership, Lacson said the police would be more cautious in issuing gun licences. He declared that he personally would have to sign any new permits. While Lacson backed away from his original plan to ban the carrying of all arms by civilians outside their homes, the results of even limited reforms have been dramatic.⁴³⁵ According to gun companies, sales are down as much as 90 per cent, leaving some on the verge of bankruptcy.⁴³⁶ On the other hand, if anecdotal newspaper reports are any guide, it seems likely that any drop-off in legal arms acquisitions has been matched by an increase in illegal purchases. Not surprisingly, the Philippines' gun lobby has reacted angrily.⁴³⁷

In areas of conflict the Philippines government has organised disarmament 'buy back' schemes with the goal of reducing the number of small arms in circulation. The so-called 'Balik-Baril' program running in Mindanao has produced mixed results. The BARIL [Bring a Rifle Improve Your Livelihood] program worked by offering former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) fighters compensation for turning in their weapons. The payments ranged

from P1500 to P4000 for foreign made pistols and low-powered rifles to P9000 to P15000 for high-powered assault rifles, light machine guns and B40 rocket launchers.⁴³⁸ These incentives could not hope to compete with black market prices, where an M16 could reportedly fetch as much as P30000 and a carbine or .45 calibre P25000. Indeed, in the wake of its hostage taking spending spree, Abu Sayyaf was reportedly offering twice the normal market rate for an M16.⁴³⁹ Despite this, by 10 September 1999 almost 5000 weapons had been turned in by MNLF members seeking to return to civilian life. Of these, 1760 were M1 Garands; 1563 were unspecified 'carbines' and 884 were M16s or AR15s. Only 20 AK47s were handed in.⁴⁴⁰ But despite the number of weapons collected, it is thought that only a fraction of MNLF firearms were handed in. Indeed, according to Makinano and Lubang's sobering analysis of the Mindanao problem, it seems likely 'the number of firearms circulating in Mindanao remains high or [has] even increased'.⁴⁴¹

Singapore

Singapore began producing small arms on an organised basis over three decades ago. The growth and success of the country's arms industries since then has been spectacular by any measure.⁴⁴² Singapore was not even mentioned in one list of defence producers in 1973, yet by 1983 it was described as a 'defence producer of more than regional significance'.⁴⁴³ Today, Singapore's small arms industry is without peer in Southeast Asia. It is the only country in the region capable of producing high quality small arms from the drawing board to the production line, and Singaporean products have proved themselves capable of holding their own in the highly competitive international small arms market. In terms of gun control, Singapore has extremely strict gun laws and is one of the few countries in ASEAN not to have a problem with the leakage of military weapons. It is a major haven for the broking of arms deals, however, and has developed an international reputation as an important entrepôt port for the transfer of illegal arms.

History and ownership

Singapore began producing its own small arms, ordnance and ammunition in 1967. Over the last three decades, Singapore's small arms and ammunition producers have undergone a number of changes in identity and ownership. Despite that, the real power behind the arms sector - the Singaporean state - has remained a constant presence. As a book published by the country's only small arms producer, Singapore Technologies (ST), puts it, 'the story of [Singapore Technologies] is inseparable from the story of the country itself; the part is wrapped up in the whole'.⁴⁴⁴

State control has historically been achieved through the incorporation of the arms industries within a government holding company. From 1974 to 1989

this was Sheng-Li (Victory) Holdings. Sheng-Li was officially owned and overseen by the Finance Ministry, but in practice was supervised by the country's Ministry of Defence (MinDef).⁴⁴⁵ MinDef appointed the members of its board of directors and set broad policy guidelines, although company officials were apparently allowed to make day-to-day business decisions without direct interference from the government.⁴⁴⁶ In keeping with other Government Linked Companies (GLCs), Singapore's defence industries are expected to turn a profit. They were also told they could not automatically be assured of the business of the Singapore Armed Forces.⁴⁴⁷

In 1982, Singapore's defence industries were rationalised and two new divisions were introduced. One of these, the Singapore Technology Corporation (STC), incorporated the country's small arms maker: Chartered Industries of Singapore (CIS) and several ordnance producers.⁴⁴⁸ It also included the arms industry's marketing wing, Unicorn International.

Another reorganisation took place on 19 April 1989, when the defence industries were brought together under the name Singapore Technologies (ST).⁴⁴⁹ The choice was supposed to reflect the fact that they were increasingly involved in non-defence related production. ST was structured into four groups: Industrial, Ordnance, Aerospace and Maritime, with small arms production falling under Singapore Technologies Ordnance. The ST Ordnance group included Chartered Industries and another 16 companies, including Allied Ordnance of Singapore, Chartered Firearms Industries, Ordnance Development and Engineering, Singapore Ordnance Engineering, and Unicorn International. In November 1997 the four ST companies (by now called ST Automotive, ST Aerospace, ST Marine and ST Electronics) were brought under a single holding, ST Engineering, and traded on the Singapore stock exchange.

Today, Singapore Technologies is controlled through Temasek Holdings, the Singaporean government's investment arm. Temasek Holdings holds a 57 per cent interest in the company, along with Raffles Nominees (12%), DBS (11%), HSBC Singapore (4.3%) along with a range of other banks and investment companies. In 2000 Singapore Technologies Automotive acquired Chartered Industries (CIS) to create a new land systems arm of the company known as Singapore Technologies Kinetics (ST Kinetics). Chartered was subsequently renamed Founders Industries Pte Limited (FIPL).⁴⁵⁰ ST Kinetic's business focuses on four key areas - vehicles, support, weapons and munitions.⁴⁵¹ In addition to producing small arms, ST Kinetic provides design and engineering services for military vehicles, weapons systems and munitions including from manufacturing, upgrading, and repair to maintenance and life-cycle management.⁴⁵²

Small arms production

Singapore's first small arms manufacturer, Chartered Industries of Singapore (CIS), was established in 1967. It began with the production of

ammunition and made its first exports in the period 1967-69, supplying several million rounds of 5.56mm ammunition to Australian forces fighting in Vietnam.⁴⁵³ CIS also assembled and built parts for the AR15/M16 (Model 614-S) rifle under licence from Colt.⁴⁵⁴ Under the terms of the commercial licence, eight primary parts of the rifle were built in Singapore, with the balance purchased from Colt at standard export prices.⁴⁵⁵ CIS is estimated to have produced between 150,000 and 180,000 of the local M16s between March 1971 and March 1977 including 30,000 rifles that were exported to Thailand in 1973.⁴⁵⁶

Under its licensing agreement with Colt, however, CIS's export rights were restricted to a limited production period.⁴⁵⁷ As a result, the company subsequently entered into negotiations with the British company Sterling to acquire designs for a new assault rifle.⁴⁵⁸ The result was the Singapore Assault Rifle (SAR)-80, whose first prototypes were made at Chartered Industries in 1978. The SAR-80 was designed 'primarily for export'⁴⁵⁹ and to minimise production costs the weapon's components were made partly from sheet metal pressings and partly from standard parts available on the commercial market. The result was a mixed success. Despite the fact that the SAR-80 was two-thirds the price of the M16, the Singapore Armed Forces ordered only 20,000, preferring to retain the more reliable Colt as its standard weapon. This raised questions among potential buyers and hurt foreign sales.⁴⁶⁰ Eventually the weapon was dropped from production but not before it was exported to Sri Lanka, Somalia and Thailand (the latter of which purchased 10,000).⁴⁶¹ The weapon was also reputedly sold to Slovenia.⁴⁶²

In 1988, CIS unveiled the successor to the SAR-80, the SR-88 which was 'improved in most respects'.⁴⁶³ There were changes in construction with the lower receiver made of aluminium alloy casting and the upper receiver a steel pressing. With a rate of fire of 750 rounds per minute and the capability to fire three-round bursts, it also incorporated a number of other design changes intended to reduce fouling and corrosion.⁴⁶⁴ Along with the M16S1, it became the standard rifle of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) and according to one author 'has also been sold elsewhere in the Far East'.⁴⁶⁵ Two years later, in 1990, CIS produced the SR-88A, which used the same firing mechanism as the SR-88 but showed evidence of further improved construction techniques. A carbine version of the weapon with a shorter barrel was also produced for use by special forces. The SR-88A was exported to several states, including Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.⁴⁶⁶

Production today

- Ultimax 100 light machine gun

The Ultimax-100 Section Assault Weapon has been a mainstay of CIS production for more than two decades. Billed as 'the lightest 5.56mm calibre

machine gun in the world', the Ultimax was designed with the help of two Americans, Robert Waterfield and James Sullivan (the latter having previously worked on the Stoner AR-15 weapon, a predecessor to the M16).⁴⁶⁷ It is gas piston-operated, with a rate of fire of 400-600 rounds per minute and a maximum range of about 800m. It can be fed from standard 20 or 30-round box magazines or a 100-round drum. The Ultimax is designed to be operated by a single user and is renowned for its reliability and low recoil. Indeed, CIS's patented low-recoil system is so effective that the weapon can be fired without the buttstock attached, making it possible to use it in confined spaces or by paratroopers.

While the Ultimax received glowing reviews from users (Jane's describes it as 'an excellent weapon'), like the SAR-80 it has only had limited success as an export item. One reason is that its release in 1982 came shortly after the Belgian FN Minimi appeared on the market, with the result that several armed forces that would probably have chosen the Ultimax had already committed themselves to the Minimi.⁴⁶⁸ The Ultimax has been exported by Singapore, however, and is currently in the national inventories of the Philippines, Slovenia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Zimbabwe.⁴⁶⁹ *Jane's Infantry Weapons* also reports that it is in service with the Croatian armed forces and was used during the civil war in Bosnia.⁴⁷⁰

- SAR 21

In the past, Singapore's weapons production philosophy has been described as one of 'sub-optimisation'.⁴⁷¹ That is, it has used proven technologies and established designs and has refused to manufacture a given defence product ahead of anyone else. According to Singh and Kwa this risk-averse philosophy has prevented a catastrophic product failure.⁴⁷² The unveiling of Singapore Technologies' Singapore Assault Rifle (SAR) 21 in late 1999, however, seems to mark a departure from this historically cautious attitude. In many ways the SAR 21, which ST markets as 'the assault rifle for the 21st century', is a ground-breaking weapon. It is the first assault rifle to have a laser-aiming device built into the stock, it does not need its sight to be zeroed and it has a number of patented safety features. *Janes' International Defense Review* describes it as a 'unique design' that bears only 'superficial resemblance to other bullpup assault rifles'.⁴⁷³ As such, the SAR 21 is symbolic of Singapore Technologies' confidence in their ability to design and produce high-quality small arms.

Development of the SAR 21 began in 1993, when Chartered Industries launched its search for a rifle to replace the M16S1. Research over the first two years focused on finding viable design technology. The designers' aim was to develop a weapon that was significantly more accurate than the M16, while at the same time keeping it compact and light, even with an integrated optical sight.⁴⁷⁴ The resulting weapon, the SAR 21, was launched in 1999.⁴⁷⁵

The SAR 21 is a 5.56mm gas-operated weapon, made of high strength engineered plastics and composites. It is a modular design, comprised of five components: the upper receiver, lower receiver, barrel, bolt and magazine. It comes with a high-quality integrated 1.5 X optical scope, which can be up-graded to a 3X scope for sniper and sharp shooter use.⁴⁷⁶ The SAR 21 is also equipped with a Laser Aiming Device (LAD) built into the stock, which can be activated by the switch of a button. Powered by a single AA battery, the LAD can operate continually for 4 hours. It can be used in day or night operations, in both the visible and infra-red light spectrum.⁴⁷⁷

The rifle is a 'bullpup' design, meaning that the receiver (or main body of the rifle) is moved to the rear and integrated into the weapon's stock. This allows the retention of a full-length barrel despite the fact that the overall length of the weapon is closer to that of a carbine. The shorter length provides an advantage in close combat situations or when soldiers are mounted in vehicles. A disadvantage typically associated with the 'bullpup' design is that the receiver is next to the user's face, which risks injury in the event of a magazine explosion. The SAR 21, however, incorporates a unique patented safety vent, which in the event of a such an explosion directs the force away from the user's face.⁴⁷⁸

According to Singapore Technologies, the SAR 21's rate of fire is 450 to 650 rounds per minute and it is effective to a maximum range of 460m using M193 ammunition or 800m when used with SS109 ammunition. The weapon offers select fire capability, so the user can quickly switch between semi-automatic and automatic fire. The magazine, which contains 30 rounds, is made of clear perspex, and is indexed, allowing the user to see at a glance how many rounds remain.⁴⁷⁹

According to people who have fired the weapon, the SAR 21 is very light, solidly built and has almost no recoil.⁴⁸⁰ It is also reputed to be extremely accurate. Singapore Technologies claims it is 30 per cent more accurate than an M16, an assertion supported by industry reviews. One test conducted by writers from Jane's *International Defense Review*, returned 90 per cent hits at 300m using what they called 'extremely fast semi-automatic fire'.⁴⁸¹ The weapon never misfired or jammed once during the shooting. A minor criticism raised by one Western user was that it appeared that the SAR 21 had been built with the smaller frame of the Singaporean soldier in mind, and that as a consequence, the rifle felt a little undersized.⁴⁸² In general, however, the consensus reaction to the SAR 21 has been one of high praise.

According to information from Singapore Technologies, several different versions of the SAR 21 will be offered for export.⁴⁸³ These include (1) SAR 21 Light Machine Gun - this differs from the standard weapon in that it includes a heavy barrel and bipod and it fires from an open-bolt system; (2) SAR 21/40mm Grenade Launcher - here the SAR 21 is fitted with a 40mm grenade

launcher with a 9-inch barrel and the laser aiming device is mounted on the weapon's quadrant platform to facilitate quick and accurate target acquisition; (3) SAR 21 P-Rail - this has a sight mounting platform in place of the integrated optical scope, allowing for the incorporation of other kinds of sights, depending on the needs of the user; and (4) SAR 21 Sharp Shooter - this features a more powerful 3X optical scope in place of the standard 1X sight.

In 2000, as part of its push into the US market, Singapore Technologies gave demonstrations of the SAR 21 to various American government agencies, including Special Forces and the US Marine Corps.⁴⁸⁴ It also took part in major defence exhibitions such as the Tactical and Security Resources Expo (TREXPO); the National Defense Industrial Association Symposium and the Association of the US Army Convention and Exhibition. An SAR 21 'shootoff' was organised at a range in Fairfax, Virginia, for US Congressional staffers and military officials. In addition, the weapon was demonstrated in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.⁴⁸⁵ Despite this enthusiastic marketing, Singapore is not known to have sold any SAR 21s at this point in time.

- CIS .50 MG

The CIS .50 machine gun has been in production since 1988 and is the standard GPMG of the Singapore Armed Forces. It is gas-operated and modular in construction, with five basic components. It uses a dual disintegrating belt system to feed the weapon with ammunition and has a rate of fire of 600 rounds per minute. The gun can be provided with a tripod or a pintle mount for fitting into armoured vehicles.⁴⁸⁶

- CIS 40GL 40mm grenade launcher

Developed in 1990, the CIS 40GL is a modular-construction, single-shot grenade launcher capable of firing all types of 40 x 46mm low velocity grenades. At 655mm long and 2.05 kg, it is made of thick aluminium alloy and high strength engineering plastics. The weapon has four major components: the barrel and receiver, the feed cover and the trigger mechanism and rearsight. Two versions are available, one with a buttstock for use as an individual weapon and one which can be used with a rifle in the same manner as the American M203. The CIS 40GL can be configured to fire a range of ammunition, including high explosive, illumination, tear gas, baton and practice grenades. It has a maximum range of 400m. According to Singapore Technologies, it 'has been accepted by many military, paramilitary and police forces around the world'.⁴⁸⁷ Known purchasers include Papua New Guinea.⁴⁸⁸

- CIS 40AGL

The CIS 40AGL is a 40mm automatic grenade launcher. It can either be mounted on a light vehicle or operated by a single soldier. The weapon fires a standard 40mm High Velocity (HV) grenade up to 2200m and can be configured

to fire single shots or on automatic. Like many ST weapons, it is a modular design and can be broken down into four major assemblies without any special tools. Several optical configurations are available, including a reflex sight, a day optical sight, and a night vision scope.⁴⁸⁹ In 1993 Singapore sold the rights for licensed production of the CIS 40AGL to Indonesia's PT Pindad (Persero).⁴⁹⁰

- **Ammunition, ordnance and grenades**

In addition to small arms production, ST also manufactures a large range of ammunition and ordnance. These include 5.56 x 45 mm Ball (SS109) FMJ, and 7.62 x 51mm Ball M80, Tracer M62, AP61 as well as a blank.⁴⁹¹ Exports of Singaporean ammunition are known to have gone to Australian forces serving in Vietnam, Thailand, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the United Arab Emirates.⁴⁹² There have also been unconfirmed reports of sales to Cambodia, Myanmar and two African states.⁴⁹³

- **Mortar bombs**

ST produces three types of mortar ordnance: two high explosive (HE) bombs and one smoke bomb.⁴⁹⁴ The two HE are similar but differ in terms of their fuses. Both are made of streamlined forged steel filled with 250g of grade 1 TNT. One type has an A2 super-quick/delay fuse screwed into the nose fuse well, the other uses an SF1 point detonating fuse. Both have a range of between 150m and 2.5km. The smoke bomb is filled with 271g of titanium tetrachloride and uses the SF1 point-detonating fuse. It is ballistically similar to the HE bombs. ST also produces training and drill rounds.⁴⁹⁵

- **Grenades**

ST produces its own grenades, including hand grenades and low and high velocity grenades. The most basic weapon is the SFG 87 fragmentation hand grenade, made of high-strength plastic. It is filled with 80g of RDX and TNT explosive and 2200 steel balls. The weapon has a lethal radius of 10m. An identical but inert training grenade is known as SPG 93. The company's smoke grenade is a conventional hexachlorethane combustion type, designated M8.⁴⁹⁶

ST Engineering produces several different 40mm grenades in both low and high velocity types. The HEDP S401B is a dual-purpose shaped charge and fragmentation grenade, designed for use in low-velocity launchers like the CIS 40 GL and American M79/M203.⁴⁹⁷ It has a maximum range of about 400m and incorporates a point-detonating fuse capable of penetrating 63mm of mild steel. For training purposes, ST produces the S406B TP, which is ballistically similar to the S401B but produces an orange dye on impact.

In addition, Singapore manufactures five different 40mm High Velocity grenades, all capable of being fired from launchers such as the CIS 40AGL or the American MK 19 Model 3. Three are HE fragmentation types with point-detonating fuses. They are designated HEDP S411, HEDP-SD S413 and HE S412.

The S411 and S413 are capable of penetrating thick mild steel up to 2.5 inches thick and have a lethal radius of 5m. In addition, ST produces two target practice variants (TPT S415A and S416A). The S413 is promoted in ST materials as its 'green grenade' as it comes with a mechanical self-destruct feature. It has been exported to Sweden.⁴⁹⁸ Licensed production rights for the S411 have been sold to PT Pindad (Persero) of Indonesia.⁴⁹⁹

In March 2001, ST Kinetics announced plans for the launch of an upgrade kit designed to fit all existing 40mm Automatic Grenade Launchers, including the CIS 40 AGL and the American MK 19 Model 3. The kit, called an Air-Burst Munition System (ABMS), is essentially a fire control system combined with a 40mm air-bursting munition. When a round is fired from grenade launcher, the ABMS system automatically programs the fuse to explode in the air above the target, releasing a cloud of deadly fragments.⁵⁰⁰ The munition is being offered with the same mechanical self-destruct option used with the S413 grenade. ST Kinetics has completed feasibility studies and technology demonstrations for the ABMS, which is scheduled for the next stage of production in 2002. The munition is being developed in collaboration with the Swiss defence producer, Oerlikon Contraves AG, which will provide the Programmeable Time Base Fuse technology.⁵⁰¹

Profitability

The Singapore Technologies group is one of the top ten arms producers in the world, achieving a total of \$1 billion in sales by 1999.⁵⁰² Singapore Technologies Engineering is a profitable part of the ST stable: in 2000, it reported a net profit of S\$288.14 million, an increase of 43.7 per cent on the previous year.⁵⁰³ Unfortunately ST Kinetic does not provide disaggregated data on its small arms production, so it is impossible to determine the profitability of such operations. Some useful information can be gleaned, however, from STK's 2000 results as they separately identify revenue gained from the acquisition of Chartered Industries. First quarter (1Q) results 2000 for ST Kinetic show a total turnover of just under S\$134 million and a pre-tax profit of S\$18 million.⁵⁰⁴ According to unaudited company results, this made for an after tax profit of about S\$14m for the quarter. Of total company sales for the quarter, Chartered/Founders Industries contributed S\$43 million. According to the report, 'sales of [Founders Industries] in respect of its trading activities accounted for the increase in turnover of the Engineering, service and trading segments'. This sector went from S\$9 million in 1Q1999 to \$14 million in 1Q2000, a 53 per cent increase in pre-tax profitability. Profit for the sector before tax jumped from a mere S\$203,000 in 1999 to S\$3.2 million in 2000.⁵⁰⁵

Gun control

Singapore has the strictest gun control in Southeast Asia and some of the strictest in the world. Possession of weapons is regulated by the Arms and

Explosives Act, which defines 'arms' as including firearms, air guns, air pistols, automatic guns, automatic pistols and any other kind of gun from which any shot, bullet, or other missile can be discharged or noxious fumes can be emitted. It also includes any component part of such weapons, such as bayonets, daggers, spears and spearheads.⁵⁰⁶ It is also illegal to sell replica guns without a licence.⁵⁰⁷

Some weapons, such as shotguns for clay pigeon shooting or pistols and rifles for target shooting, can be legally owned, but only with a firearms licence. Other weapons, such as military-style assault rifles and submachine guns, are illegal in any circumstances. To get a firearms licence, an applicant must be a member of a recognised gun club, such as the Singapore Gun Club or Singapore Rifle Association. The prospective owner must then apply to the police and pass a background check showing they have no criminal record or mental illness. Even once an application is approved, a weapon can only be fired at a regulated shooting club and must be stored in the gun club's armoury at all times when not in use. It cannot be kept at home.

According to a representative of the Arms and Explosives Branch of the Singapore Police Force, the penalties for illegal gun possession are extremely strict.⁵⁰⁸ Possession of an illegal weapon is punishable by a jail sentence of ten years to life imprisonment. Possession of more than two illegal weapons constitutes arms trafficking and is punishable by death. Discharging a firearm during the commission of a crime (whether or not anyone is injured or killed) is also punishable by death.⁵⁰⁹ Unlike many of its neighbours, Singapore also has the ability to effectively monitor and enforce its firearms laws. It is one of only two ASEAN states to keep a computerised record of people authorised to own guns.⁵¹⁰

The severity of the penalties and the generally low incidence of violent crime leads the country's Police Force to claim that illegal arms possession or smuggling is not a significant problem in Singapore.⁵¹¹ However, given that some 60,000 commercial vessels pass through the Port of Singapore annually, it would be extremely difficult to totally prevent any movement of illegal small arms into or through Singapore.⁵¹²

Singapore also strictly controls the import and export of military goods. It maintains a list of controlled goods, which includes arms and explosives, steel helmets, and toy pistols, guns and revolvers. Singapore also lists sanctions on the export of most military equipment to Angola, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (including Kosovo), Liberia, Libya, Sierra Leone and Somalia.

Control of the export, import and almost all movement of small arms and explosives is the function of the Arms and Explosives Branch (AEB) of the Singapore Trade Development Board. In practice, military-related goods will only be approved for importation or export to or by one of the Government Linked Companies (GLCs) such as Singapore Technologies Kinetic.

Exports

Because Singapore Technologies is expected to make a profit and is not guaranteed the business of the country's armed forces, it has a keen interest in developing overseas markets for its weapons. As was noted above, Singapore has exported small arms and ammunition almost since Chartered Industries began production in 1967. In the early 1980s the decision was taken to generate at least 40 per cent of revenues through 'vigorous exports' and more recently the company declared the goal of raising 50 per cent of revenue from exports and the rest through domestic supplies.⁵¹³

Chartered Industries used to complain that this objective was hampered by the fact that it historically had to work within government guidelines on sales within Southeast Asia. According to a 1992 article 'regional sensitivities preclude the sale of substantial quantities of CIS-made weapons to either ASEAN or other countries in the Far East'.⁵¹⁴ Quite how concerned the Singaporean government was with these sensitivities is debatable. Singapore has sold tens of thousands of assault rifles to Thailand, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, Ultimax-100 light machine guns to the Philippines and Papua New Guinea and has licensed the production of grenade launchers and grenades to Indonesia. Singapore Technologies has also opened a marketing office in Vietnam with hopes of breaking into the market there.⁵¹⁵ In addition, Singapore is widely believed to have sold a prefabricated arms factory to Myanmar in 1998. For more details on this transfer, see the Myanmar/Burma country study.

Entrepôt trade

Singapore is one of the busiest ports in the world, servicing some 60,000 vessels annually. Many of these are carrying entrepôt trade destined for third-party states. Small arms and ammunition are included in these consignments and Singapore has developed a reputation as an important trans-shipment point in the international arms trade. Some of these deals involve illicit transfers where export licences are granted for the shipment of weapons to Singapore, although it is not actually their final destination. Such was the case when arms from a British company, BMARC, were illegally routed through Singapore to Iran.⁵¹⁶ Singapore has also been accused of providing 'false' End-User Certificates (EUCs) for transactions that sent arms to Iraq.⁵¹⁷ According to some reports Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF) has also routed weapons destined for non-state actors through Singapore, as has Sri Lanka's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers or LTTE).⁵¹⁸

It is extremely difficult to trace weapons shipments that enter Singaporean ports and then move on to other states. They are sometimes deliberately misidentified as machinery or industrial equipment. Occasionally, however, intelligence reports surface identifying a particular consignment. For example, according to a report in *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Singapore was also the point of origin for a shipment of small arms to the Solomon Islands in 1999.⁵¹⁹

One other means for probing the entrepôt trade is by cross-referencing national arms export reports published by supplier states. For example, the Directorate of Conventional Arms Control of South Africa's Ministry of Defence publishes an annual list of its exports by category and destination. Looking at the list for 1997-1999 we can see that Singapore imported 28,225,000 Rands (\$3.52 million) worth of 'infantry hand held and portable assault weapons and associated ammunition of a calibre less than 12.7mm' from South Africa.⁵²⁰ Given that Singapore forbids private ownership of military weapons and is self-sufficient in small calibre ammunition and small arms, this raises the interesting question of where these arms ended up. Unfortunately, the South African data does provide an answer.

Thailand

Thailand produces its own small arms and ammunition at a state-run weapons centre near Lop Buri. It is self-sufficient in small calibre and mortar ammunition and also produces a range of ordnance. While past exports have been modest, the Thai armed forces have recently expressed an interest in increasing sales of ammunition, mortars and military spares. Thailand has some problems with the circulation of military small arms, in particular to criminal organisations and hired guns. In the past, the country was the key conduit in the supply of grey market weapons to the Khmer Rouge and other groups fighting in Cambodia. Today, Thailand is central to the supply of black-market weapons from Cambodia to insurgents fighting in Burma, Aceh, Sri Lanka and north-eastern India.

Imports and production

From the early 1950s to the early 1980s, Thailand's biggest single source of small arms was the United States. Through until 1980, Thailand received a total of 132,989 rifles and 72,914 carbines via a variety of US military assistance programs. The US also provided Thailand with 15000 machine guns in aid and direct commercial sales. These included the M1917 and M1919 as well as the M60 and M2HB models. Some 55000 M16A1s (Model 613) were purchased from Colt in 1975 and a few hundred M16 carbines (Model 653) were added in the early 1980s.⁵²¹

In addition to American arms, Thailand also purchased the Belgian FN FAL (in 1961) and German Gewehr 3 (G3) assault rifles. It has also bought weapons and ammunition from closer to home. In 1973 the Thai government imported 30,000 Colt M16A1 rifles (Model 614S) from Singapore, and it later added 10,000 SAR-80 assault rifles made by Chartered Industries of Singapore (CIS).⁵²² It has also imported ammunition from sources including Singapore, Indonesia and Pakistan's state-owned arms company, Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF).⁵²³ Despite these imports, US small arms continue to dominate

Thai acquisitions to the present day. In 1994 the United States sold Thailand 360 M240 and 180 M85 machine guns; in 1995 it provided another 601 M60 machine guns, and in 1997 it sold 37500 M16A2s, 107 M2HB machine guns and 4700 M4 carbines.⁵²⁴ The M16A2 is now the standard infantry weapon of the Royal Thai Army, but the national inventory also includes G3s, FN FALs, HK33s, HK21E, AR15s and M16A1s rifles.⁵²⁵ Special Forces are armed with a variety of modern commando weapons, including the Heckler and Koch MP5 submachine gun.⁵²⁶ The Thai military also uses American M203 and M79 grenade launchers.

A large number of weapons, many built to military specifications, have also been imported into Thailand by individuals. According to Thai customs officials, 'tens of thousands of firearms' have been imported in this manner in the last five years. In the 12 months to April 2001 alone, some 3-4000 weapons were brought into the country.⁵²⁷

Domestic production

While many of its small arms needs in the past have been met by imports, Thailand has long been interested in producing its own weapons and ammunition. The Thai government apparently bought the rights to produce the post-war vintage American Ingram Model 8 submachine gun and invited the weapon's designer to assist with the setting up of a factory to make the gun, although there is no record of any production.⁵²⁸ Today, the country's principal producer of military small arms is the Ministry of Defence-run Army Weapons Production Centre (AWPC), located in Lop Buri, 150 kilometres north of Bangkok. During the 1970s the Centre assembled approximately 30,000 HK33 assault rifles under licence from the German company Heckler and Koch.⁵²⁹ In 1988 the AWPC began to produce the HK21E, also under licence from Heckler and Koch, after smaller quantities of the HK21E had been imported for use by the Thai marines.⁵³⁰

In terms of current production, AWPC is not believed to be producing rifles, although this cannot be confirmed. In a meeting between Thai foreign ministry, police and defence officials and representatives from the Bangkok office of the NGO Non-Violence International, government officials stated somewhat obliquely that Thailand is 'not producing any guns that could be legally sold on the local market, or exported for civilian use'.⁵³¹ They would not make any further clarifications. According to *Forecast International*, AWPC produces spares and has 'gradually increased its manufacture of components for [M16 and AR15] rifles over the years'.⁵³² Recent comments by company spokesmen suggest that the centre is producing or plans to produce mortars tubes.⁵³³

AWPC is known to be producing a range of small arms ammunition, as well as 60, 81 and 120mm mortar shells, some of which have been offered for export.⁵³⁴ One industry estimate claims that the centre is capable of producing 37

million rounds of 7.62mm and almost 50 million rounds of 5.56mm x 45mm (M193) ammunition annually.⁵³⁵ According to the head of the AWPC Technology Division, Lieutenant Lerthorn Prahanpot, the AWPC also provides Thailand with the capacity to be wholly self-sufficient in artillery and mortar ammunition.⁵³⁶

Exports

According to another AWPC spokesman, Colonel Siddhiporn Tubtieng, about two per cent of the centre's production between 1998 and 2000 was sold to buyers in Singapore and Malaysia, presumably for re-export.⁵³⁷ The Thai Ministry of Defence recently announced plans for the centre to step up its export efforts, partly in an attempt to earn foreign exchange and ease the army's budgetary difficulties.⁵³⁸ AWPC hopes to be able to sell mortars, machine gun ammunition and spare parts.⁵³⁹ Officials point to the company's low labour costs and ISO 9002 status as comparative advantage, but given the high cost of importing the raw materials needed to produce ammunition, it seems unlikely that Thailand will do any better commercially than Malaysia's ill-fated SME.⁵⁴⁰ A Ministry of Defence adviser, General Songkram Aimpum, admits that Thailand cannot compete with Singapore, but also suggested that the two countries might be able to cooperate in the future, with Thailand perhaps supplying Singapore with military spares.⁵⁴¹

In addition to the AWPC, some industry reports also refer to a second producer of military-style weapons, called Rungphaisan Industries (or in some accounts Rung Paisal Industries).⁵⁴² The firm was apparently established in the mid-1970s to produce small arms for the Thai military. Accounts of its production vary. According to *Forecast International*, the company designed a rifle similar to the M16, designated the RPS-001. It was based around the NATO-standard 5.56 x 45mm cartridge and had selective fire capability. The company apparently made a sale of an unspecified number of weapons to the Thai government, but nothing has been heard of it since 1991.⁵⁴³

A more detailed account of the company and its products is set out by Duncan Long in a 1986 book.⁵⁴⁴ According to Long, the RPS-001 was designed by a team led by Krairach Manadamrongtham. It is described as basically an AK-47 with some 'hybrid' features borrowed from other weapons. It was 5.56mm calibre and had a cyclic rate of fire of 625 rounds per minute. Long describes it as a 'reliable and easy-to-use' rifle. He says Rung Paisal produced two different models: the standard RPS-001 and a short carbine version, the RPS-001S, adding 'it is possible a semi-auto version will be produced as well'.⁵⁴⁵

Domestic gun control

Thailand has a large but apparently tightly regulated domestic gun market. According to government rules, no more than three licences to sell guns can be

issued in each province. The exception is Bangkok where there are some 276 licensed gun dealers.⁵⁴⁶ Each licence regulates the numbers of weapons and amount of ammunition each dealer can purchase in a year, and this limit is strictly enforced and difficult to change. No single gun shop is permitted to import more than 30 weapons each year, although this rule has been easily circumvented.⁵⁴⁷

If regulation is strict, enforcement is less successful. Thailand has a large black market in military small arms, which had its origins during the Vietnam War.⁵⁴⁸ Many of these military style weapons are used in crimes. The country has a large gun-for-hire industry and assassinations and murders are a common means of solving business and family disputes.⁵⁴⁹ There are some 3000 murders in Thailand annually and police estimate as many as one in ten is a professional hit. According to police sources, an assassination only costs about 100000 baht (\$2500), but in some parts of the country killings can be arranged for as little as \$250.⁵⁵⁰ So significant is the industry that the Thai National Police has a Centre for the Prevention and Suppression of Hired Gunmen (CPSG) as well as a Gunmen Suppression Centre (GSC) within its general Crime Suppression Division. Each of these organisations maintains a list of suspected gunmen and accomplices. As of 1999 the CPSG list contained 1008 hired gunmen, while the GSC listed 866 killers.⁵⁵¹ Many on the lists have been involved in armed combat, either as communist insurgents, separatists, army-trained rangers, former policemen or former military personnel.⁵⁵² The most dangerous places for hits are Chonburi, Phetchaburi and Surat Thani, while Bangkok, despite its population of over 7 million, has only 47 suspected gunmen.

The Thai military has been actively involved in circumventing some gun control laws. For example, in April 2001, a senior Air Force officer was arrested after a group of seven armed military personnel stormed a warehouse at Don Muang airport and made off with 30 imported 9mm Glock semiautomatic pistols worth 1.8 million baht (\$43000).⁵⁵³ The weapons, which were being held by Thai customs because of a lack of proper paperwork, were apparently destined for a gun shop in Hat Yai, Songkhla province. After an investigation by police and Interior Ministry officials, it was discovered that the military was being used to bypass restrictions on the number of weapons each gun shop could apparently import in a year. Units were importing arms tax-free, claiming they were a 'welfare benefit' for officials and employees and saving as much as 6700 baht (\$160) in applicable duties per weapon. The imported arms were then sold on to gun shops and sold to the public. According to one source, the scale of this trade was significant. An estimated 30000 pistols and rifles were imported using this loophole in 1996 alone. The Thai Supreme Court subsequently ordered the Air Force to pay 33 million baht (\$785,000) in owed import duties and interest.⁵⁵⁴

Grey market and illegal transfers

Surrounded by neighbours coping with insurgencies and on-going conflicts, Thailand has become an important centre for the brokering and 'facilitation' of small arms transfers. It is also an important point for the trans-shipment of weapons from producers and suppliers outside Southeast Asia. In the recent past, the Royal Thai Army was an extremely important conduit for the supply of arms to the Khmer Rouge and other Cambodian opposition forces. Today, Thai involvement in the movement of illegal weapons ranges from the actions of individual arms dealers and brokers through to the active participation of serving senior military officers. Many transfers take place along the country's border regions with Cambodia and Burma, but southern ports and towns are also important for the trans-shipment of weapons to Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

Shipments to and from Cambodia

During the 1980s Thailand was a key conduit in moving weapons to opposition forces in Cambodia (including the Khmer Rouge) fighting the Vietnamese-backed regime in Phnom Penh. Weapons and ammunition were provided by the United States, Singapore, China and others but many of the transfers were arranged by a special unit of the Thai military known as 'so po ko to bo 315' or Special Operations Division 315. The unit was headed by then General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, later to become Prime Minister and Thailand's current Minister of Defence. According to one book, Special Operations 315 was independent and did not have to 'coordinate or report to any government or military office'.⁵⁵⁵ Its agents worked in civilian clothes and based themselves out of a rented shop-house in Bangkok, designed to look like a private company.⁵⁵⁶

An enormous quantity of arms was involved in these transfers to the Khmer Rouge. In one incident in 1993, Thai policemen stumbled on trucks carrying military equipment in Chanthaburi near the Cambodian border. On board they found five tons of bombs, missiles, explosives and tank guns.⁵⁵⁷ The two men arrested with the shipment confessed that the weapons had come from a nearby warehouse. Police subsequently discovered a total of 12 arms warehouses around Chanthaburi, all piled high with weapons. According to one estimate they contained 1500 tons of equipment, most of which was originally from China. In addition to heavy weapons, the haul included hand grenades, mortar shells, RPG-2 rocket-launchers and grenades and 40 cases of machine gun propellant belts. In the warehouses, Thai police arrested 45 men, all of whom were members of the Khmer Rouge.⁵⁵⁸

The Thai government continued to send arms and supplies to the Khmer Rouge even after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords and after the United Nations sent a peacekeeping force to oversee free elections.⁵⁵⁹ In April 1993 20

truckloads of arms and equipment were spotted near Ampil in northeastern Thailand. In 1994, then First Prime Minister Norodom Ranariddh, told the press he had photographs taken secretly showing trucks delivering arms to the Khmer Rouge from the Thai border town opposite the KR stronghold in Pailin.⁵⁶⁰ The US government also reportedly had satellite photos showing the transfers being made.⁵⁶¹

Thai businessmen also supplied guns and money to the Khmer Rouge. According to a member of the Thai National Security Council, loggers and traders working in KR-controlled regions were obliged to supply the fighters with arms, food and medicine.⁵⁶² These were often obtained from the Thai army. The military also provided weapons in exchange for logging and precious stone concessions. The scale of these logging and mining operations was staggering. By 1992 there were an estimated 300 tractors and 30000 people mining for blue sapphires in and around Pailin.⁵⁶³ According to one American estimate, logging concessions granted to Thai businesses were worth between \$10-20 million *a month* to the Khmer Rouge.⁵⁶⁴

But if weapons poured *into* Cambodia from Thailand during the civil war and early 1990s, by the middle of the 1990s as the government began to secure most of the country, Cambodia began to export its surplus arms. This was not done officially, but rather involved a complex network of brokers, military personnel and corrupt officials. Large numbers of arms belonging to demobilised soldiers and opposition fighters began to turn up on the Thai border. As the tide of the civil war turned against them, many Khmer Rouge fighters also began to sell their weapons. Bangkok-based arms dealers operating on their own made some of these purchases. Their customers were largely criminal gangs in Thailand, but they also involved some exports to crime syndicates in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Larger sales often involved the Thai military. The army, which had made the transfers to Cambodia in the first place, was perfectly poised to take advantage of the movement of weapons out of Cambodia. Small arms and light weapons also began to be exported from Cambodia's southern ports. (For more detail see the Cambodia country study.) Most of these also passed through Thai ports on their way to their final destinations: insurgent groups in Burma, India, and Indonesia as well as Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers (LTTE).⁵⁶⁵

Transfers to Burma

Burma is one of the most important markets for small arms and munitions moving out of Cambodia through Thailand.⁵⁶⁶ According to one Thai national security official 'all the armed forces of [Burmese] minority groups rely on weapons purchased from the Thailand market'.⁵⁶⁷ The routes for transporting arms from the Thai-Cambodian border to Burmese rebels have apparently stayed fairly constant since the 1980s.⁵⁶⁸ Weapons that crossed the border in the lower northeast of Thailand (Ubon Ratchathani, Sisaket, Surin and Buriram)

were stored in Korat and then forwarded to the Karen, Mon and Mong Thai Army forces.⁵⁶⁹ Supplies delivered through eastern provinces of Aranyaprathet, Prachinburi, Trat and Chanthaburi were moved through Chonburi and Bangkok.⁵⁷⁰ Larger shipments sometimes went by boat to Prachaub Khiri Khan and then overland to Karen rebels in Amphur Saiyok, Kanchanaburi, or to Mon forces across the border from Sangkhla district.⁵⁷¹

Incidents involving the interception of arms being smuggled to Burmese groups are extremely common. Many implicate the Thai military and police. In 1993 General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, then Minister of the Interior, admitted that most of the trucks caught shipping weapons to Burma belonged to the Thai government and that most of the smugglers were policemen.⁵⁷² In one incident in 1994, Thai border policemen apprehended two Thais dressed in military uniforms driving a truck loaded with arms. They admitted that Cambodian soldiers in Sa Kaew had provided and loaded the arms and said they were taking the weapons from the Cambodian border to the north-east of Thailand en route to Burma. In 1995 Thai police arrested two soldiers and a civilian transporting 'war weapons' in Mae Hong Son, on the Burma border. They said the arms had come from Cambodia and admitted that they had made the trip several times before.⁵⁷³

Thai military and police involvement in this trade continues to the present day. In August 1998 a Royal Thai military officer was arrested in Bangkok when police found 600,000 rounds of Czech ammunition and an M16 in his home.⁵⁷⁴ In July 1998 police uncovered a cache of 50,000 rounds of ammunition and a range of guns and rocket-propelled grenades, launchers and anti-aircraft ammunition. Police sources quoted in the Bangkok daily *The Nation* said corrupt police officials were behind the ring, which was smuggling the arms to Karen rebels.⁵⁷⁵

The movement of arms and ammunition along the Burma border is closely related to other illegal smuggling activities, in particular the trade in narcotics. In the past, the main problem was heroin production and trafficking by groups like Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army. Small arms, light weapons and ammunition were shipped into Burma in exchange for heroin. In one incident in 1994, more than 50,000 rounds of ammunition for M16 rifles and M60 machine guns were seized with a shipment of almost 30kg of heroin. The ammunition was marked and traced to the stocks of the Thai Third Army region.⁵⁷⁶ More recently, the bulk of the drug trafficking has been in methamphetamines, mostly from the United Wa State Army in the eastern Shan State. An estimated 600 million speed pills crossed into Thailand in the last year from the Wa's 50 drug factories. As well as sending drugs, the Wa have also exported arms to Thai criminal gangs. Seizures by Thai police suggest they also use Thailand as a transshipment point for the sale of assault rifles and ammunition to other rebel groups in Myanmar.⁵⁷⁷

As the Wa's activities have increased, Thailand has taken a stronger military posture along the Burmese border. In 2000, Myanmar's government accused Thailand of directly supplying arms to Burmese rebels fighting the government and the Wa, a claim the Thai government denied. Despite that, in April 2000 Thai deputy Foreign Minister Sukhumbhand Paribatra admitted that Thailand was supporting what were described as 'clandestine sabotage operations' against the United Wa State Army inside Burma.⁵⁷⁸

Transfers to Sri Lanka

If arms to Burmese rebels usually move over land, weapons to another major consumer, the Tamil Tigers, move by sea. Intelligence sources say the most important areas of activity for arms smuggling are islands off the coast of Phuket, as well as the southern provinces of Ranong and Satun.⁵⁷⁹ A Canadian Security Intelligence Service report identifies the coastal town of Trang as another LTTE base.⁵⁸⁰ Thai military personnel and police are alleged to be involved and former Norwegian Special Forces members are also said to have provided training in the use of explosives.⁵⁸¹

Weapons destined for the Tamil Tigers are frequently shipped on trawlers, some of which are apparently owned by former or serving members of the Thai military. The LTTE also has 11 vessels of its own. Shipments cross the Bay of Bengal and are then transferred at sea to Tiger speedboats off the coast of Sri Lanka.⁵⁸² With more than 10000 vessels fishing Thai waters and a large number of small islands where weapons can be trans-shipped, effective interdiction is extremely difficult.⁵⁸³ Accordingly, the scale of this trade is also difficult to quantify but reported seizures suggest it is significant. In one incident in March 1999, an armed trawler that had departed from Thailand carrying an estimated \$10 million worth of weapons destined for the LTTE was sunk in a joint operation between the Indian and Sri Lankan navies.⁵⁸⁴ In March 1997, the Thai navy seized a ship reportedly destined for Sri Lankan waters carrying six M16s, four mortar tubes, four rounds of M79 ammunition, two RPGs, 5000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, 5000 rounds of 5.56mm ammunition, 33 unspecified anti-tank rockets and chemicals for bomb production.⁵⁸⁵ In February and May of 1998, two fishing vessels carrying 146 and 45 machine guns respectively were impounded by Thai authorities. A subsequent investigation revealed that the boats were linked to the LTTE.⁵⁸⁶ In January 2000, Thai police seized another trawler on a river at Kra Buri, near Ranong. It was carrying Carl Gustav rocket launchers and rocket-propelled grenades, reportedly the result of a deal between the LTTE and two Burmese rebel group, the Karens and the Arakan Liberation Party.⁵⁸⁷

Southern Thai ports are also important transit points for weapons shipments coming from Vietnam and Cambodia. According to the RAND analyst Peter Chalk, 'arms from Cambodia, Vietnam and Burma transit through

Thailand before being loaded onto vessels at the southern port of Ranong for the trip across the Bay of Bengal.⁵⁸⁸ The town of Hat Yai on the Kra Isthmus, has been identified as another centre for the movement of weapons from the Gulf of Thailand to the west coast for shipment on to Sri Lanka, Burma and India. In May 2001, two senior military officers were among those arrested after two sergeants from the 42nd Army Circle in southern Songkhla province were caught trying to deliver two truckloads of arms to a weapons dealer. The seizure included 23 landmines, 60 hand grenades, 720 bars of detonating powder and 15000 rounds of M16 ammunition. The arms were believed to be destined for an LTTE base on an island nearby.⁵⁸⁹

In an attempt to counter arms smuggling to the LTTE and insurgent groups in India, Thailand signed a four-nation security arrangement with Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh in April 1999.⁵⁹⁰ While details about specific mechanisms are sketchy, the agreement reportedly included improved exchanges of information between intelligence officials. The agreement is a step forward in promoting regional cooperation against trafficking in small arms and other illicit goods, but the absence of Myanmar raises questions about its likely effectiveness. Islands along Myanmar's long coastline are often used by smugglers en route to South Asia. The reported involvement of Tatmadaw personnel in smuggling operations also means Myanmar's participation in any such arrangement in the future is unlikely. According to Lloyd's of London, the LTTE only relocated to Phuket after being forced to abandon a base on Twante Island in Myanmar they occupied through an understanding with some generals in Yangon.⁵⁹¹

Transfers to Aceh

Small arms also pass through southern Thailand destined for the secessionist group Aceh Merdeka on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. Many of these arms come originally from Cambodia and there are reports that they move through Southern Thailand and into Malaysia with the help of the Thai separatist group the Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO).⁵⁹² According to a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in August 1999, while some arms and support for Aceh Merdeka come from Malaysia, 'the bulk of the AK47s and M16 assault rifles entering Aceh are being smuggled out of southern Thai ports'.⁵⁹³

According to official sources, weapons for GAM are transported across the Straits of Malacca in small boats, often being retransferred again at sea, before reaching their final destinations in Sumatra in places like Lhokseumawe, Padang, Tanjung Balai and Peureulak.⁵⁹⁴ Malaysian or Indonesian naval and marine forces find it extremely difficult to cover such a large area of coastline. Many of the fishing trawler companies used in these operations also have close links to corrupt elements in the Thai military and the customs service. Some are also reportedly owned by former or serving senior Thai naval and army officers.⁵⁹⁵

Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Little is known about Vietnam's small arms production and transfers. According to sources in Hanoi the country does not produce small calibre weapons or ammunition, but does have the ability to refurbish existing weapons and make them in effect as good as new. Vietnam has recently asked several countries for assistance in developing its own defence industries, including the production of small arms. The country also inherited a massive number of arms at the end of the Vietnam (or 'American') War in April 1975. Despite that, gun ownership and gun violence is rare. Gun smuggling is a concern, particularly across the border with China, and there are reports of leakage from military arsenals. Vietnam does not have the resources to adequately secure its borders and gun smuggling and trans-shipment through the country will likely remain a concern for some time.

Domestic production

Unfortunately, there is very little information in the public record about Vietnam's production of small arms since the end of the Vietnam War. A 1988 article on Vietnamese defence expenditure notes that imports of small arms and ammunition from the Soviet Union were necessary because Vietnam 'has almost no production capability'.⁵⁹⁶ There are reports that an organisation simply referred to as 'State Arsenals' formerly produced small arms for the Vietnamese military. These included a copy of the Russian RPK light machine gun, which was designated TUR-1 and which was apparently a copy of the Chinese Type-56.⁵⁹⁷ It also appears that Vietnam has produced modified versions of several other small arms. According to Edward Clinton Ezell's *Small Arms Today*, Vietnam has produced a Type 68 pistol, based on the Soviet TT33 7.62mm pistol. It has also altered the French 9mm MAT-49 submachine gun, left behind by colonial forces, to fire 7.62mm rounds. The People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN)'s K-50M rifle (see below) is also a modified version of the Chinese Type 50 assault rifle (itself a modification of the Soviet PPsh-41).⁵⁹⁸

Reliable sources in Hanoi say that Vietnam does not have any facilities for the production of its own small arms. However, it is able to carry out depot-level maintenance on its existing stocks of small arms. Vietnam acquired a maintenance capability when it captured the old US depot at Long Binh outside Bien Hoa. The facility is still used as a storage area by the Vietnamese military. The endstate of a weapon that undergoes this level of maintenance is essentially brand new, as if it had come from a factory.⁵⁹⁹

Military inventory

Apart from limited local production in the past, most of the PAVN's inventory was acquired on favourable terms from the former Soviet Union and China. Between 1964 and 1971 the Chinese claim to have supplied (what was then

North) Vietnam with 2 million rifles and over 270 million rounds of ammunition.⁶⁰⁰ After Sino-Vietnamese relations worsened in the late 1970s the Soviet Union and subsequently Russia have become more important. Soviet ammunition produced in 1990 and provided to Vietnam is still in use in the country today.⁶⁰¹ China is also a major supplier of small calibre ammunition for the PAVN.

According to published sources, the current PAVN inventory includes: 7.62mm Tokarev TT33 and Type 68 pistols; Russian SKS and Chinese Type 56 rifles; AK47 and AKM assault rifles; the Second World War era Soviet PPSH-41 submachine gun; the 7.62mm K-50M submachine gun mentioned above, and the modified French MAT-49. Vietnam also has 7.62mm DPM/RPD and Type 53/67 light machine guns and a 7.62mm SGM medium machine gun.⁶⁰² Of these weapons, the K-50M is in service today and soldiers guarding military facilities in and around Hanoi can be seen carrying the weapon. Other troops have been seen with SKS rifles and AK47s. Many of these weapons are extremely old and in poor condition.⁶⁰³

Imports and technology transfer

Little is known about Vietnam's recent acquisitions of small arms, ammunition and defence technologies. However, according to the leading commentator on the Vietnamese military, Carlyle Thayer, Vietnam is attempting to acquire the technology needed to produce its own modern armaments, including small arms and ammunition.⁶⁰⁴ It has also recently reached agreements with several states for the import of these weapons.

One important source has been North Korea. A Vietnamese military delegation visited Pyongyang in May 1994 for preliminary discussions on the possibility of North Korean arms sales to Vietnam. The following month, Vietnam's Defence Minister Doan Khue led a high-ranking military delegation to Pyongyang for an official visit at the invitation of Marshal O Chin-u, Minister of the North Korean People's Armed Forces. In November 1994, Vice Marshal Choe Kwang, the Acting Minister of Armed Forces and Chief of Staff of the Korean Peoples Army, paid a return visit. Shortly thereafter it emerged that Vietnam and North Korea had struck a deal on barter trade under which North Korea would supply Vietnam with weapons parts and ammunition in exchange for rice.⁶⁰⁵ Another \$100 million barter deal for defence equipment was signed in December 1996 when Vietnam's Deputy Minister of Defence, General Nguyen Thoi Bung, visited North Korea.⁶⁰⁶ There are also reports that North Korea supplied an undisclosed quantity of 7.62mm ammunition to Vietnam in April 1999.⁶⁰⁷ Contacts between the two countries are ongoing. In July 2001 the second most senior North Korean leader, Kim Yong Sam, visited Hanoi, where another rice-for-arms exchange was reportedly discussed.⁶⁰⁸

Vietnam has also had contacts with India concerning weapons production and supplies. In May 1995, a Vietnamese military delegation led by the Chief of General Staff, Deputy Defence Minister Senior Lt. Gen. Dao Dinh Luyen, paid a visit to India. The delegation was received by India's Minister of State for Defence and met with senior officers of the India's Defence Ministry and the commanders of the army, navy and air force. During their visit the Vietnamese delegation studied military training and defence industries, including the operations of the company Ordnance Factories Board (OFB). In March 2000, during a return visit to Hanoi by Defence Minister Georges Fernandes, India and Vietnam signed a new defence agreement. In exchange for Vietnamese assistance in jungle warfare and guerrilla tactics, India apparently 'agreed to help Vietnam in manufacturing small and medium weapons (assault rifles) and certain ordnance products (missiles).'⁶⁰⁹ Vietnam is presently 'studying the services available from the Indian Ordnance Factory Board.'⁶¹⁰ In a familiar pattern, Pakistan has been quick to match India's offers of assistance. In May 2001, Pakistan's military leader General Pervez Musharraf visited Hanoi where he offered small arms to the Vietnamese government.⁶¹¹

In May 2000, Vietnam and the Ukraine also entered into an agreement governing military and technical cooperation. According to Thayer, the Ukraine will assist Vietnam in the development and production of artillery weapons and small arms as well as the modernisation of armoured equipment.⁶¹² In September 2000 the two sides were expected complete an agreement on military-technical cooperation and on long-term projects in the defence industry sector under which the Ukraine may assist Vietnam in 'the production of weapons'.⁶¹³

Finally, Vietnam has also sought Polish and Slovak cooperation in the production of arms and ammunition. In August 1994, Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister, Tran Duc Luong, paid a visit to the Slovak Republic and held talks with Slovak arms manufacturers about the possibilities for cooperation. Vietnamese Defence Minister Pham Van Tra made a follow-up in May 2000, where he expressed interest in cooperation with the Slovak armaments industry. Again, details about the specific weapons types involved in these discussions are not available.

Gun control and domestic unrest

Vietnam has few problems with gun violence. In fact, given the vast number of small arms circulating in the country at the end of the war, it is remarkable that there is so little gun-related crime. Major cities are safe, police are lightly armed and few soldiers or armed security personnel are to be seen. Despite the apparent lack of violent crime, however, weapons are still in circulation, especially in rural areas. Hanoi is most concerned about arms in the central highland provinces, where there has been unrest between ethnic minority groups

and the government. In July 2001, the Ho Chi Minh City newspaper *Tuoi Tre* (Youth) reported that in the province of Kontum, residents had 'voluntarily' handed over 223 firearms, 58 grenades and 556kg of explosives in the past two years. In Dak Lak province to the south, authorities had collected 152 firearms and 120 homemade weapons. Most of the weapons dated back to the Vietnam War, when locals fought alongside US forces.⁶¹⁴

There are also reports that an anti-communist group, known as the Free Vietnam Movement (FVM), maintains low-level insurgency operations along the Vietnamese-Cambodian border. The group reportedly includes members of the former South Vietnamese armed forces and is funded by expatriates in the United States and Europe. It is armed with small quantities of rifles and sidearms, some of which were obtained from Cambodian arms depots.⁶¹⁵ In one example, an August 1999 fire at the Cambodian navy's arms depot in Ream in Kompong Son province, was linked to the FVM.⁶¹⁶ The Ream arms depot was suspected of being a source for stolen military weapons sold clandestinely to the FVM. The Cambodian newspaper *Moneakseka Khmer* reported that the fire took place after the Vietnamese embassy in Phnom Penh had demanded the Cambodian government reveal those responsible for selling arms to the FVM.⁶¹⁷ Vietnamese officials demanded action after seizing weapons destined for the FVM at a border crossing and tracing their serial numbers to the Kompong Som depot.⁶¹⁸ According to Cambodian military officials, the Free Vietnam Movement is also believed to have cooperated with anti-communist movements in Cambodia and Laos.⁶¹⁹

Transfers from Vietnam

When the government of the Republic of South Vietnam fell in April 1975, a large quantity of American supplied arms were seized by North Vietnamese troops. It is estimated that the US abandoned between 1.5 and 1.8 million small arms and 150000 tonnes of ammunition in South Vietnam. These included an estimated 90000 M1911A1 pistols, 791000 M16A1s, 857,580 other 'assorted rifles', 15000 M60 general purpose machine guns and 47000 M79 grenade launchers.⁶²⁰ Many of these weapons were subsequently sold by the Vietnamese government to allies and allegedly to terrorist groups.⁶²¹ According to the testimony of a Cuban defector before the US Congress, Cuba was one major buyer and many American arms ended up being supplied to Communist rebels fighting in Central America.⁶²² American Vietnam war-era weapons have also been seized in drug shipments coming into Hong Kong from Vietnam.⁶²³ There are also credible reports that a US intelligence agency has film of Vietnamese weapons being provided to the New People's Army (NPA) group in the Philippines.

There have also been several reported incidents in the past five years of Vietnam War era weapons being smuggled back into the United States, sometimes for collectors and sometimes for more nefarious purposes.⁶²⁴ In 1997, US

Customs stumbled across a large shipment of weapons from Vietnam in a warehouse in San Diego. The arms included M1 and M2 carbines and M16 assault rifles, as well as M79 grenade launchers. The age of the weapons, together with the fact that some were missing parts, suggested that they might have been shipped for spares.

The circuitous path the shipment took to the United States is indicative of the lengths arms smugglers will go to move their products. Originally a consignment of two containers, the cargo began its journey in Ho Chi Minh City in March 1997. From there it travelled by sea to Singapore and then to Bremerhaven, Germany. By the time the shipment left Germany it had grown to three containers. At San Diego two of the containers were unloaded, but a third was shipped back to Vietnam. Bizarrely, it then went over land from Ho Chi Minh City to Thailand and then back to Long Beach, California, before being put on a train to New York City. In August 1997, two American citizens, one of Vietnamese origin were charged with conspiracy to import firearms parts into the United States. According to prosecutors, the weapons were intended for sale to firearms dealers in California and Oregon.⁶²⁵

In addition to the Cuban sale, it is likely that Vietnamese weapons and ammunition were also transferred to allies in Cambodia and Laos during the 1980s. The TUR-1 rifle, for example, has been identified in both countries.⁶²⁶ In addition, Vietnam is believed to have sold North Korean-made 'Igla' SAMs to the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) and there have been rumours that Vietnamese weapons were supplied to insurgents in the southern Philippines. In 1992, a large shipment of 5.56mm US-made rifles originating from Vietnam was reportedly unloaded in the southern Philippines island of Mindanao, where the weapons were purchased by local officials.⁶²⁷ The government of Vietnam strongly denies these charges.⁶²⁸

Despite official denials, smuggling of weapons from Vietnamese sources does take place. In 1994, caches of small arms were seized aboard Vietnamese trawlers operating in the South China Sea. The fact that some of the 'fishermen' arrested in these operations appear to be former military personnel suggests that there may be leakage from Vietnamese government arms depots and armouries.⁶²⁹

While some smuggled weapons appear to originate from Vietnamese sources, such as military arsenals, Vietnam is increasingly important as a trans-shipment area for weapons originating in China and Russia. Chinese weapons cross Vietnam's porous northern border and move to Vietnamese ports where they are loaded onto cargo ships. Reports of Russian weapons moving through Vietnam suggest they arrive directly at Vietnamese ports where they are further dispersed throughout Southeast Asia and possibly beyond.⁶³⁰ The traffic is not all in one direction. Arms also move from Vietnam into southern China. There has been some limited cross-border cooperation with Chinese authorities to try

to prevent this trafficking. For example in June 1995, acting on Vietnamese information, Chinese police shot dead Huang Wenya, an alleged arms smuggler based in Caobinh Province.⁶³¹ Despite this, even with bilateral cooperation between the two countries it will be difficult to eliminate the trade altogether. Vietnamese customs say that with a total staff of 7000, of whom about 2000 work in administrative positions, it is impossible to totally secure the country's long and often remote border regions.⁶³²

Meeting the Small Arms Challenge in Southeast Asia: Policy Recommendations

The previous chapters have described in some detail the nature and scale of small arms production and transfers in Southeast Asia. They suggest that it is extremely difficult to draw a clear line between the legal and illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. Most of the illicit arms used by terrorists and insurgent groups were at one time legally produced, possessed and transferred. Once these weapons fall into the wrong hands, however, they can present a serious challenge to both state sovereignty and human security. Large accumulations of illegal weapons help fuel conflicts, impede economic development and foster corruption and crime. This is tragically clear in the southern Philippines, Aceh, Maluku and parts of Myanmar.

But while small arms present a significant threat to sovereignty and good governance in parts of Southeast Asia, there are many simple, practical steps that can be taken to meet that challenge. This final chapter outlines some initiatives that might be taken to ensure better management of the production, transfer and control of small arms in the region. These are steps that need to be taken by individual states, by groupings like ASEAN and the ARF and by the international community, including international financial institutions.

National level controls

National responses by individual ASEAN states will be a vital part of any response to the small arms challenge, since both domestic and international law are, for the most part, actually enforced by states.¹ There is no state in ASEAN that does not need to take at least some national action to address weaknesses in its regulation of arms production, possession, brokering or transfers.

Illegal production

This monograph suggests that there is comparatively little illegal production of small arms in Southeast Asia at present. Few insurgent groups have the ability to make their own arms and the only area where illegal production is an important means through which unauthorised actors acquire military weapons seems to be the southern Philippines. Illegal production in and around Danao and Mandaue City needs to be addressed by the Philippines government and a clear statement of who is and who is not permitted to produce arms in the country needs to be backed up with stronger enforcement measures. Given that a large number of people in the area are dependent on arms production for their livelihood, these measures will also need to be matched with assistance and investment to help the region develop alternative industries.

This could be an opportunity for various international institutions to play a role, a possibility that is discussed in greater detail below.

If illegal production is a serious problem in the Philippines, elsewhere in the region most weapons in illegal circulation are generally not new, but recycled. The most important step states can take to prevent these small arms transfers is to improve security over weapons already lawfully in circulation. Most of these arms reach unauthorised actors when they leak from government arsenals, security forces and private owners. Two responses to the problem of leakage are necessary: improved regulation of private firearms and better security and management of military and police stockpiles and holdings.

Better gun control

Several ASEAN members need to improve their regulation of firearms and ammunition. While some states in the region, such as Singapore, have clear, well-established and well-enforced laws about gun ownership and possession, many others do not. In Cambodia, for example, the introduction of a comprehensive weapons law has begun, but it has been stalled by bureaucratic disputes.² The country's government needs to give urgent priority to resolving this issue. Other ASEAN members need to clarify their domestic gun control legislation to make it clear who is and who is not authorised to possess military firearms. For example, Indonesia and the Philippines should remove exceptions that permit special ownership rights for certain groups such as VIPs, senior government officials and politicians.³ In the Philippines, legislation permits people to possess different types of firearms depending on their social standing, occupation and income level.⁴ Such distinctions merely give weapons ownership cachet and undermine the overall effectiveness of gun control. Clear lines must be drawn between arms that are permissible for individual ownership and military-style weapons that have no place in the hands of untrained civilians.

Control and security of stocks

Improving controls over small arms stockpiles is one of the most important steps individual ASEAN states can take to reduce leakage and illicit small arms transfers. Action to secure stocks can be divided into two distinct areas: improving controls over arms manufacturing facilities in producer states, and improving the security of weapons in national military holdings and arsenals in both producer and non-producer states.

Generally, leakage directly from production facilities in Southeast Asia is not a significant problem. Unlike arms industries in the developed world, most small arms manufacturers in Southeast Asia are owned or effectively controlled by governments. In ASEAN, only the Philippines has a large private gun industry producing near-military quality weapons for sale. Of the five national

weapons producers in Southeast Asia, only Pindad PT is known to have had leakage from its facilities, with the reported use of explosive materials from its factory in Bandung used in bombings in Jakarta last year. Even this is disputed. According to the company, the illegal transfer may have occurred once the materials had already left the company for the Indonesian military.⁵ The incident is an important reminder, however, that ASEAN governments need to closely monitor their own arms industries to ensure that weapons and ammunition produced only go to authorised recipients.

Leakage from military stockpiles, armouries and magazines is a much more serious problem. This kind of transfer is probably the single most important source for illegal weapons reaching unauthorised actors in the region. A comprehensive response to this challenge will require multiple steps. The first and most basic step for some states will be to work out just what they already own. All ASEAN states should compile a detailed record of the weapons they believe are held by their military and police forces. The results of such an audit should then be compared to weapons actually deposited in armouries, police stations and stockpiles. An accurate picture of what is in the possession of the authorities and what is missing is a necessary foundation for further action. Governments also need to make clear who exactly is responsible for the security and accounting of all weapons and ammunition.

Second, states should take action to ensure that they only maintain holdings of those weapons actually needed for national security and policing. As was indicated in the ten country studies, many regional militaries still hold large stocks of obsolete arms, some dating back to World War II. These weapons have no practical value to a modern military or police force, but could still present a threat in the hands of criminals or insurgents. Any weapons surplus to national needs should be identified and destroyed. Obviously, such a plan requires the development of some criteria for what constitutes a 'surplus' weapon. The Organisation on Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has come up with some basic indicators that could be applied within ASEAN. One is the size of a state's armed forces — i.e. how many troops does it have? Another indicator is the number of weapons needed for 'legitimate defence needs', including external defence, internal security and participation in peacekeeping operations. Each state would have to decide this figure for itself, but sharing the information with other states in the region could be a useful confidence-building measure. Producer states could then choose only to supply states that commit to these principles.⁶

Once surplus weapons are identified, they need to be destroyed rather than left where they can be stolen, misplaced or transferred to criminals and insurgents. The destruction of weapons is straightforward and relatively inexpensive. According to the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC), several cost-effective options for destruction are available, ranging from cutting

arms with an oxy-acetylene torch to simple crushing or shredding. In Cambodia, the EU-ASAC program prefers to use the even cheaper method of burning surplus arms in what they call a 'flame of peace'.⁷

While destruction programs offer a simple way to reduce the arms that can leak into unauthorised hands, funding can be an issue for some developing states. There is currently no international fund for providing assistance with the destruction of surplus arms, although one has been suggested by the British government.⁸ Such a fund would be useful in Southeast Asia where several states lack the resources needed to organise demobilisation, destruction and reintegration (DD&R) programs.

Third, there must be better security for those weapons that are deemed necessary for national security purposes. Some effective measures that could be taken here would cost very little. Weapons not in use should be separated from their magazines or bolts and these should be stored in a safe and secure area away from the principal arms storage area. Access to military and police armouries and ammunition storage magazines should be restricted to authorised personnel only. All weapons should be stored separately from ammunition. Other steps that could be taken with the help of foreign military assistance include improving the physical security of armouries and weapons storage depots. Arms need to be held in secure buildings, preferably concrete structures lined with pressed steel. Armouries need to be adequately secured with appropriate fencing, guards, locks and where possible, alarms. The weapons inside should be stored in a cage and preferably should be locked onto gun racks. Sidearms should be kept in a locked safe.

There is also a need for better weapons control practices. There is little point in having a secure physical environment for weapons storage if weapons can be signed out of an armoury by soldiers or police without proper permission and without detail records being kept of who has what weapon. Ideally, military small arms should only be signed out to specific personnel for specific purposes or fixed periods of time and must be returned immediately afterwards. Records should be as detailed as possible, noting which individual weapons are out by serial number. Regular audits of arms and ammunition stocks should be arranged. Specific personnel should be held responsible for permitting access to armouries and magazines and keys should not be given out to other personnel. Combinations on locks should be changed regularly. To be sure, none of these steps will prevent the most determined thief from putting a gun to someone's head and demanding access, but they make gaining unauthorised access to weapons much more difficult. Developing adequate weapons control procedures and record keeping is an important part of professionalising regional militaries and police forces. States that have military assistance and defence cooperation programs with ASEAN members might want to consider funding initiatives to help develop these habits.

Another area that needs to be addressed is control of ammunition at the national level. As a United Nations Panel of Experts report noted, 'attempts to address small arms and light weapons would be incomplete if they did not include due regard for ammunition'.⁹ Ammunition is the vital ingredient that makes the misuse of small arms possible. It is impossible to mass-produce reliable, military quality ammunition without precise industrial equipment, special conditions and imported raw materials. Insurgents and criminals therefore either need to acquire it through leakage or by direct sales from private producers and states.

Stricter controls on ammunition sales, storage and possession represent a potential point of intervention in the cycle of illicit small arms proliferation. In addition to the controls on military stocks noted above, ASEAN states should enact regulations requiring that privately owned ammunition be stored securely and separately from weapons and that it must be properly marked with an identifying code. Some ASEAN states also lack basic legislation specifying the amount of ammunition a person can own at any given time.¹⁰

Record keeping and marking

The marking or stamping of weapons and ammunition with a distinguishing symbol or number allows illicit or unauthorised transfers to be traced to their point of origin. This aids law enforcement personnel in their work, prevents the diversion of lawful transfers and helps foster greater accountability on the part of states for their weapons transfers.¹¹ Switzerland and Canada have both proposed an international agreement to require such marking, although this has yet to be acted upon. In ASEAN, currently only Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand specifically require that weapons have a unique identifying mark.¹² The other members should follow suit, as anticipated in the Program of Action that came out of the United Nations meeting in July 2001.¹³

Any marking scheme needs to work hand in hand with an information-gathering and information-sharing mechanism, so that suspect arms and ammunition can be checked against a record of legally owned and transferred arms. The UN Program of Action urges states to 'ensure that comprehensive and accurate records are kept ... on the manufacture, holding and transfer of small arms and light weapons within their jurisdiction'.¹⁴ Currently, only six of ASEAN's ten members maintain national registers of small arms and light weapons and only two of those (Singapore and Brunei) are computerised.¹⁵ The development of national registers of privately-held small arms in all ten ASEAN countries should be a priority. If possible, this information should be recorded and stored in an electronic form, so it can be easily accessed and shared among law enforcement officials. Electronic records, however, should only be *in addition* to traditional paper records. Financial constraints in some ASEAN states will mean that well-kept paper records kept in a local police

station will probably be a more useful resource for law-enforcement personnel than an expensive but inaccessible computer-based system far away in the national capital. National measures should also be complemented with appropriate regional action, such as steps to make this information available to other ASEAN states.

Brokering

Another legislative initiative that could be adopted by states in the region is stricter control of arms dealers and brokers.¹⁶ As the previous chapters noted, brokers and intermediaries play an essential role in the movement of arms into several Southeast Asian conflict zones. Better regulation of brokering is essential if state policies on the transfer of arms and other lethal technologies are to have meaning. National registration of authorised arms dealers would be one simple step, as would the adoption of legislation criminalising all illicit brokering activities.¹⁷ Brokers and arms dealers are adept at exploiting inconsistencies in national regulations concerning arms transfers. Consequently, there is a particular need for regional harmonisation of national laws on brokering in ASEAN to prevent arms dealers from arranging transfers in a neighbouring state that would be unlawful in their home jurisdiction.¹⁸ One solution is for states to pass legislation giving themselves extra-territorial controls over their citizens. This has been done in the United States and, although it is unlikely to find unanimous support in ASEAN, some states may be prepared to enact such laws.

Capacity building

Even if adequate gun control and import/export legislation were introduced by all ASEAN states, the much bigger challenge of enforcing those laws would remain. The primary obstacle here is the lack of capacity and the prevalence of weak states in Southeast Asia. Even assuming there is political will to suppress illicit arms trafficking, states like Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar all lack the resources to be able effectively to control their frontiers, secure and destroy surplus weapons and enforce gun control laws. They often do not have the funds needed to hire, train and adequately pay the customs officials and police needed for these tasks.

Where there is political will but a clear lack of resources to enforce laws, aid donors and international institutions can play a role. Historically, international financial institutions (IFIs) like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank have been reluctant to link their restructuring programs to what might be perceived as national security issues, but given the influence they could have in many ASEAN states, development assistance seems an important option for encouraging steps to reduce the proliferation of weapons. The problem of illegal small arms manufacturing in Davao might be one

instance where an international development program, whether funded through the IFIs or individual donors, could make a contribution to reducing the number of illegal weapons entering the marketplace. Some of the 'weapons for development' models might be applicable here. Likewise, using loans and aid to secure weapons stockpiles, to destroy weapons deemed surplus to national requirements, or to improve the professionalism and salaries of specific civilian law enforcement personnel, are all ideas worth considering. Given the proven link between weapons proliferation and serious challenges to development, this would seem a reasonable and judicious use of funds.

Regional measures

While national level measures are important, tackling the illicit trade in small arms will also need to be supplemented with greater levels of regional cooperation. Here, the first steps should focus on developing greater levels of cooperation between ASEAN officials at the working level.

Cooperation between law enforcement personnel will obviously be especially important. While there is already a regional institution, ASEANAPOL, which brings together senior police officers from around the region, more attention needs to be given to better cooperation at the operational level. Too often cooperation here is either *ad hoc* or non-existent. Regularised and substantive contacts and exchanges need to be established between the customs, justice and police officials who are charged with enforcing existing laws and regulations on a day to day basis.

These links also need to be matched by better exchanges of information about state export controls and authorised small arms transfers. Here some relatively untaxing proposals could be adopted by ASEAN states immediately. Simply identifying and exchanging the names of the officials in each state who can be contacted with questions about small arms shipments would constitute a positive development. A clear national policy statement from each ASEAN member listing the people and institutions within that state that are authorised to issue export permission and End-User Certificates (EUCs) would also be helpful in preventing illicit transfers.

In some cases intelligence and military cooperation between states to prevent arms smuggling will be possible. There is some regional precedent here, with the four-nation security arrangement signed between Thailand, Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh in April 1999.¹⁹ The agreement seems to require little more than exchanges of information between intelligence officials, but it is a step forward in promoting regional cooperation against trafficking in small arms and other illicit goods. There are clearly other parts of the region that could develop similar, hopefully stronger forms of cooperation. The kidnapping of tourists during 2000 and the violence in the southern Philippines and Maluku shows that the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia all have a common interest in preventing the movement of arms to illegal groups.

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has discussed small arms issues through its Experts' Group Meetings (EGM), and at a track two seminar on 'Conventional Arms Transfers and Small Arms' in Cambodia in February 2001. The one substantive initiative taken so far on small arms in the ARF context was an Australian proposal for a declaration on the responsibilities of member states concerning small arms transfers. While the wording of the declaration was only aspirational and not especially demanding, China, Russia and several ASEAN states worked hard to block its progress. After some debate at the ARF Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) meeting in Vietnam in May 2001, the initiative was opposed by Indonesia and other ASEAN members and not passed on to the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Hanoi. This reflected very poorly on the ARF and meant the Asia-Pacific had no regional initiative to take to the UN Conference in New York in July. While progress is even less likely now than before the conference, pressure for some sort of ARF action on small arms should be sustained by members like Australia, Canada, Japan and New Zealand, as well as more sympathetic ASEAN members like Malaysia. All ARF members should be urged to adopt the measures set out in the UN Program of Action.

International action

It is important to recognise that regional action on small arms in Southeast Asia will, to some extent, depend on what happens on the wider international stage. If the issue of small arms is allowed to fade away in the wake of the United Nations conference, ASEAN states may feel less compelled to take positive collaborative steps to tackle problems in the region. It is therefore important that like-minded states continue to press for the adoption of the measures set out in the UN Program of Action. They should also work to build an agenda of additional measures to be tackled in the future.

There are already several initiatives that could be incorporated in such an agenda. They include the Swiss and Canadian proposals for an international marking regime mentioned above; tougher action to control brokering and arms dealing; measures to regulate and control the proliferation of so-called 'craft weapons', especially where they are involved in conflicts; support for the development of an international norm against transfers to non-state actors (or non-state-like entities); and a badly-needed overhaul of the highly problematic End User Certificate (EUC) system. Small arms measures should also be seen as complementary to other conventional arms control and transparency measures such as the United Nations Conventional Arms Register (UNCAR). All ASEAN and ARF members should be encouraged to make timely and detailed submissions to the register.

Conclusion

Small arms production and proliferation in Southeast Asia present a complex and multi-faceted challenge. The illicit trade alone includes leakage both large and small from state arsenals and stockpiles, illegal production, domestic transfers to criminal groups, well-organised commercial size shipments, and state-authorised covert transfers to non-state actors. Steps to address the problems presented by small arms will therefore require action at a range of levels. Action at the state level, while necessary and important, will on its own be insufficient. A combination of national, regional and international responses is needed to better regulate the legal trade, to reduce the illegal supply of small arms and to begin to remove the underlying causes of insecurity that create the demand for these weapons in the first place.

The UN conference on small arms demonstrated that many states continue to have serious concerns that effective measures to control illicit small arms will impinge on their sovereignty. If proposals to improve the management of small arms are to be successful in ASEAN, they must be presented in a way that is not perceived as threatening regional norms, which place a premium on sovereignty and non-interference. The best approach for advocates will be to adopt a 'building block' model, focusing immediate efforts on the proposals outlined above that can be framed as sovereignty-enhancing. This should not be especially difficult. Given that the requirements of statehood are usually understood as including control of territory and borders and control over the conduct of foreign relations, it needs to be made clear to states in the region that the current activities of illicit arms traffickers actually undermine their sovereignty. Once these states accept the need for action to control small arms at the national level, work can begin on building a more substantive and more structured regional small arms regime.

Notes

Introduction

- 1 These factors are set out in Keith Krause, 'Norm-Building in Security Spaces: The Emergence of the Light Weapons Problematic,' paper prepared for the Annual Conference of the International Studies Association, Washington DC, March 1999.
- 2 On small arms and civilian casualties, see Lora Lumpe, 'Curbing the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons,' paper presented to the 5th Conference of the Center for Preventative Action, Council on Foreign Relations, December 1998.
- 3 Lora Lumpe, 'Transparency in the Legal Small Arms Trade,' paper presented at the Swiss Government's workshop on Small Arms, Geneva, 18-20 February 1999.
- 4 Jeffrey Boutwell & Michael Klare, 'Small Arms and Light Weapons: Controlling the Real Instruments of War,' *Arms Control Today*, September 1998. A version of the article is available on-line at <http://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/augsep98/mkas98.htm>.
- 5 See *Freedom From Fear: Canada's Foreign Policy for Human Security*, (Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade, Ottawa, 2000), p.9; *Small Arms: Japan's Role in Disarmament and Development*, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, 2000); also Kavi Chongkittavorn, 'Tackling new global agendas,' *The Nation*, 29 October 1998; AAP Newsfeed, 'Howard backs move to limit small arms,' 13 November 1999.
- 6 For the full text of the ECOWAS moratorium, see Jacqueline Seck, *West Africa Small Arms Moratorium: High-Level Consultations on the Modalities for the Implementation of the PCASED* (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Geneva and Lomé, 2000).
- 7 *Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Material*. The full text of the Convention is available at <http://www.oas.org/en/prog/juridico/english/treaties/a-63.html>.
- 8 *Small Arms Survey 2001* (Oxford University Press, London, 2001). For more information about the work of Small Arms Survey, see <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org>.
- 9 Sarah Meek, 'Combating Arms Trafficking: Progress and Prospects,' in Lora Lumpe (ed) *Running Guns: The Global Black Market in Small Arms* (Zed Books, London, 2000) p.199.
- 10 Cited in 'Small Arms' United Nations General Assembly Document A/52/298, 27 August 1997, p.11.
- 11 *Ibid*, pp. 11-12.
- 12 Antipersonnel mines (APMs) are included in most definitions of small arms, but are usually excluded from empirical studies on the grounds that they are already addressed in a literature of their own. This was the approach adopted by the UN Panel of Governmental Experts and will be followed here. For a

- detailed study of landmine production and transfers, see *Landmine Monitor 2000* (Human Rights Watch, Washington DC, 2000).
- 13 Some early scholarly accounts include light anti-tank weapons and shoulder-fired anti-aircraft weapons as 'small arms'. See for example the contribution of Stephanie Neuman, cited in Swadesh Rana, *Small Arms and Intra-State Conflict*, UNIDIR Research Paper No. 34 (UNIDIR, Geneva, 1995), pp. 3-4. In 1996 the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) defined small arms as including 'certain types of heavy machine guns (HMG) with a calibre not exceeding 12.7mm, man-portable anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles and mortars, mines and grenades'. See UNIDIR, *Small Arms Management and Peace-keeping in Southern Africa* (Geneva, UNIDIR, 1996), p.8. This definition appears to have been discontinued in the wake of the 1997 Panel of Experts report.
 - 14 Lora Lumpe, 'Curbing the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons'.
 - 15 Article 51, *United Nations Charter* (United Nations, New York, 1948).
 - 16 'Small Arms', United Nations General Assembly Document A/52/298, 27 August 1997, para 34, para 57.
 - 17 For more information on the regional regulation of firearms, see the United Nations International Study on Firearm Regulation (United Nations, New York, 1998); see also the excellent summary by Katherine Kramer, *Legal Controls on Small Arms and Light Weapons in ASEAN* (Small Arms Survey & Non-Violence International, Small Arms Survey Working Paper No. 2, Geneva, 2001).
 - 18 For the Canadian draft and reactions to it, see //www.prepcom.org/documents/gov/nov_99/canada_proposal.htm.
 - 19 Krause, *Small Arms and Light Weapons*.
 - 20 The distinction between legal state transfers and illegal transfers by non-state actors is used in the Organisation of American States' regional convention regulating arms trafficking as well as the UN Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials. The OAS convention defines 'illicit trafficking' as 'the import, export, acquisition, sale, delivery, movement, or transfer of firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials from or across the territory of one State Party to that of another State Party, if any one of the States Parties concerned does not authorize it'. Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, signed on 14 November 1997. Article I, 2 (emphasis added).

Chapter 2

- 1 Krause, *Small Arms and Light Weapons*, p.v.
- 2 Interview with Abdul Hadi Lochman, Production Manager, Small Arms Ammunition, SME Ordnance, Damansara, Kuala Lumpur, October 2000.
- 3 David J. Louscher & Anne Naylor Schwartz, 'Patterns of Third World Military Technology Acquisition,' in Kwang-II Baek, Ronald D. McLaurin & Chung-in Moon (eds.) *The Dilemma of Third World Defense Industries: Supplier Control or Recipient Autonomy?* (Westview Press, Boulder, Co. 1989) pp.32, 34.

- 4 Bilveer Singh & Kwa Chong Kuan, 'The Singapore Defence Industries: Motivations, Organization and Impact,' in Chandra Jeshurun (ed), *Arms and Defence in Southeast Asia* (Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1989) pp.21-22, 96.
- 5 Although, as Singaporean commentators frequently note, Singapore's goal has not been complete self-sufficiency, which would be unrealistic for a small state. With the exception of sidearms such as pistols, however, Singapore is completely self-sufficient in small arms and ammunition.
- 6 Quoted in Andrew L. Ross, 'The International Arms Trade, Arms Imports, and Local Defence Production in ASEAN,' in Jeshurun (ed) , *Arms and Defence in Southeast Asia*, pp.21-22.
- 7 See Singh & Kwa, p.97.
- 8 Interview with Professor Dato' Zakaria Haji Ahmad, Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, Kuala Lumpur, 17 October 2000.
- 9 Singh and Kwa, p.98.
- 10 Although it should be noted that price was not the only consideration identified by Indonesian military officials when they announced their intention to seek Chinese mortar ammunition. They also complained that mortar rounds produced by the Indonesian defence manufacturer Pindad were unreliable and of low quality. Unfortunately for Pindad, China also offered the Indonesian government cheap loans with which to finance the purchase. See 'Defence Developments', *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, June/July 2000, p.47.
- 11 See for example, the interview with the then Malaysian Defence Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar in *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 26 November 1997; see also the comments of Kamaruzzaman Shariff, then Secretary General of the Malaysian Ministry of Defence in 'Towards a Balanced and Credible Defence Capability', *Military Technology*, No. 8 (1993) pp.65-69, 67.
- 12 *Towards Tomorrow: The Singapore Technologies Story* (WordMaker Design, Singapore, 1997), p. 37; 'Singapore buys Longbows and grows its defence industry', *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, December 1999, pp.20-21.
- 13 Singh & Kwa, p.98.
- 14 For more details, see Pindad's website, http://www.pindad.com/Company_Profile/company_profile.html.
- 15 William Ashton, 'Burma receives advances from its silent suitors in Singapore', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 March 1998.
- 16 Pete Abel, 'Manufacturing Trends — Globalising the Source' in Lora Lumpe (ed) *Running Guns: The Global Black Market in Small Arms* (Zed Books, London, 2000),p. 94.
- 17 The licensing agreement required that third party sales could only proceed with the assent of the Swedish government. See Ashton, 'Burma receives advances'.
- 18 Swedish officials do not deny that the shipment was made, but have said that an investigation into the matter concluded that Singapore had not breached its licensing obligations. Interview with Paul Beijer, Director, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Phnom Penh, 18 February 2001.

- 19 A list of national inventories of small arms can be found in *Jane's Infantry Weapons 1999-2000* (Jane's Information Group, Coulsdon, 2000).
- 20 *Jane's Infantry Weapons, 1999-2000*, p. 579.
- 21 Hawke, 'Exposed — Burma's weapons industry', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 December 1998.

Chapter 3

- 1 One complication, however, is that often news reports do not accurately identify the weapons they refer to. For example, few newspaper writers are able to distinguish between the Soviet/Russian AK47 and the Chinese copy of the AK47, the Type 56 assault rifle. Many reports that refer to the use of AK47s might actually be referring to Type 56s. While there are few differences in terms of the guns' capabilities, the precise identity of the weapon obviously provides important clues about where it may have come from.
- 2 According to one survey, of 49 major conflicts fought since 1990, small arms and light weapons were the only arms used in 46. See Jeffrey Boutwell & Michael Klare, 'Small Arms and Light Weapons: Controlling the Real Instruments of War', *Arms Control Today*, August/September 1998.
- 3 Raymond Bonner, 'A Tamil Tiger Primer on International Arms Bazaar', *International Herald Tribune*, 10 March 1998, p.4; Peter Chalk, 'Liberation Tigers Of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) International Organization And Operations — A Preliminary Analysis', Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Commentary No. 77 (Winter 1999).
- 4 The exception is Islamic fundamentalism, which is discussed below under extra-regional suppliers.
- 5 Interviews with informed sources, Bangkok, November 2000; see also, David Lamb, 'Ethnic Karen Losing in Myanmar Struggle', *Los Angeles Times*, 24 November 2000; Nelson Rand, 'Nothing Left to Lose: Life and Death in the Karen State', *Soldier of Fortune*, July 2001, pp.44-47.
- 6 James East, 'Thais fighting losing battle with Myanmar's drug lords', *The Straits Times*, 13 March 2001; AFP, 'Cash, guns paid for hostages', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 2 August 2000; Armand Nocum and Donna Cuesto, 'AFP chief admits P245M paid for hostages' release', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 8 August 2000; Carlito Pablo, 'Abu Sayyaf shopping for heavy weapons', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 7 August 2000.
- 7 The Canadian government offered a draft treaty that would outlaw all transfers between states and non-state actors but this was strongly opposed by the United States, among others. For the draft and reactions to it, see http://www.prepcom.org/documents/gov/nov_99/canada_proposal.htm Not all states support this norm of course, and sources in Bangkok claim that the UWSA purchases weapons directly from Norinco factories in China. It also re-sells them to various other groups, excluding the SSA. Interview, source in contact with Burmese insurgents, February 2001.
- 8 Keith Krause, *Small Arms and Light Weapons*, p.7 (emphasis in original).
- 9 Michelle Vachon & Ana Nov, 'Unreliable Gun Statistics Agree Only that Nation Well-Armed', *The Cambodia Daily*, 20 February 2001, p.8.

- 10 A Philippine Center on Transnational Crime (PCTC) paper published in 2000 claims there are 633,607 licensed firearms in the country. Other reports cite the figure 714,757 ('Curb those guns', *Asiaweek*, 8 September 2000). The 700,000 figure is based on the PCTC report's figure, taking into account its claim that, on average, there is an average increase of 65,802 registered firearms each year. Rodrigo P. Gracia & Camilo PP Cascolan, 'PCTC Paper on Illegal Manufacturing of an Trafficking in Firearms', paper presented to the Jakarta Regional Seminar on the Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons, 3-4 May 2000, 12-13. According to a separate 1998 PNP intelligence report, 56% of all weapons in the Philippines are in Mindanao, 23% are in Luzon, 21% are in the Visayas. See 'PNP reports 137,645 guns loose nationwide', *Business World*, 28 September 1998.
- 11 Carlito Pablo, 'Gov't vies with Sayyaf in Mindanao arms market', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 8 August 2000.
- 12 Gracia & Cascolan, 'PCTC Paper', p. 15.
- 13 Interviews with representative from EU-Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Cambodia (EU-ASAC), Phnom Penh, 19 February 2001; see also the presentation by Brig. Gen (ret) Henny van der Graaf, Project Manager, EU-ASAC, to the ASEAN Regional Forum Seminar on Conventional Weapons Transfers and Small Arms, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 21 February 2001.
- 14 Interviews with informed sources, Phnom Penh, February 2001.
- 15 'Calls for int'l troops in Maluku brushed aside', *The Jakarta Post*, 7 August 2000.
- 16 'Sampit tense again after guns go missing', *The Jakarta Post*, 12 March 2001.
- 17 'Pindad, police give conflicting account on AG office bomb', *The Jakarta Post*, 8 July 2000.
- 18 'Indonesian soldier arrested for Aceh weapons sales', Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 6 January 2000.
- 19 'Senator confirms military supplied arms to Abu Sayyaf', *Manila Standard*, 1 October 1994, p.2.
- 20 '60 rebels raid Quezon town hall, seize guns', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 8 December 2000; Cynthia Borgueta & Joey A. Gabieta, '200 NPA rebs attack Samar cops, troops', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 22 September 2000; Gerry Baldo, 'Shooters lose guns to rebels', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 27 October, 1999; Delfin Mallari, 'NPA rebels raid Laguna police station, seize guns', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 8 August 2000. Lax management and 'lost' weapons is also a major problem. For example, in October 2000, 120 police officers from Negros Occidental were sued for failing to return several hundred weapons, including 114 Armalite rifles, 13 M-14s, 54 Garand rifles, 122 M1 and M2s and a large number of pistols and shotguns. See Carla Gomez, 'Policemen sued for failing to return pistols, rifles', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 4 October 2000. The same article quotes the police director for the Western Visayas ordering the return of 600 weapons issued to police who were no longer assigned to the region.
- 21 Dave M. Veridiano, 'Government men eyed in big arms haul', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 2 September 2000.
- 22 There were minor differences in news reports about the exact quantity of weapons seized. Cf 'Military combs Malaysian jungle for missing weapons',

- The Straits Times*, 5 July 2000; Thomas Fuller, 'Malaysia Armory Thieves Surrounded', *International Herald Tribune*, 5 July 2000.
- 23 Jestyn Cooper, 'Rebel group threatens Malaysian security', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 September 2000; Wan Hamidi Hamid, 'Mahathir: Arms heist gang out to topple government', *The Straits Times*, 11 July 2000; 'Nine more soldiers involved in arms heist questioned', *The Straits Times*, 13 July 2000.
 - 24 Bernama News Agency, 'Two cases of theft at army camps in last five years', 22 November 2000.
 - 25 'Audit check at military camp armouries after Steyr thefts', *The New Strait Times*, 8 August 1999; Bermama, 'All four stolen Steyr automatic rifles recovered', 19 January 2000.
 - 26 *Ibid.* See also Ghazemy Mahmood, 'Security Tightened at Military Weapons Stores', Bermama, 19 January 2000; M. Jeffri Razali, 'No cover-up of arms thefts', *New Straits Times*, 4 February 2000; Tony Emmanuel, 'Steyr Gang 'mastermind' nabbed in police ambush', *New Straits Times*, 31 August 2000; Leslie Lau, 'Gang leader was eager to rob again', *The Straits Times*, 10 September 2000.
 - 27 'Arms cache for minority groups seized in Northeast', *The Bangkok Post*, 6 September 1996. On the Hong Kong and Taiwan connection, see Lilian Wu, '12 Arrested in Connection with Arms Smuggling', Central News Agency, 10 December 2000; 'Hong Kong seizes arms on ship from Thailand', Deutsche Presse Agentur, 31 August 1997.
 - 28 Tony Gilotte, 'The \$8 assault rifle', *World Press Review*, vol. 40, no. 11, (1993), p.1.
 - 29 Bonner, 'A Tamil Tiger Primer on International Arms Bazaar' (op cit, note 3).
 - 30 Craig Skehan, 'Thais run huge arms trade', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August 1999.
 - 31 'Arms seized by Thai Navy destined for Indian rebels', *The Thailand Times*, 18 March 1997; Anthony Davis, 'Thailand tenders anti-trafficking plan to others', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 21 April 1999.
 - 32 Interviews with NGO representatives and diplomats, Phnom Penh and Bangkok, November 2000 and February 2001.
 - 33 'Cache of ammunition seized from Thai Army officer', *The Nation*, 13 August 1998.
 - 34 Davis, 'Thailand tenders anti-trafficking plan' (op cit, note 31).
 - 35 'Chuan pledges watch on Tamil arms link', *The Nation*, 29 May 1999; Robert Karniol, 'Sri Lanka says Tigers are trading arms in Cambodia', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, October 2 1996; Bertil Lintner, 'LTTE purchases, a link with Cambodia', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 December 1996. For a detailed chronological summary of LTTE smuggling operations, see Rohan Gunaratna, 'Disrupting the International Arms Pipeline to Guerrilla and Terrorist Groups: The Asian Case with Special Emphasis to Sri Lanka', paper presented to the workshop organised by the Swiss and German militaries on 'Industrial Aspects of Limitations on Small Arms/Light Weapons', Baden, 28-30 June (no year given).
 - 36 'Thailand, Sri Lanka to foster defence cooperation', *The Nation*, 9 April 1999.
 - 37 'Army chief insists rebels have local base', *The Nation*, 29 March 2000; 'Tamil Tigers "extend net in Thailand"', *The Nation*, 4 August 2000.
 - 38 'Leader of captured weapons linked to pirates', *Thailand Times*, 13 March 1997; 'Navy seizes weapons reportedly destined for Tamil Tigers', *Thailand Times*, 12 March 1997.

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- 40 Kyodo News Service, 'Thailand to investigate Tamil weapons depots', 11 January 1999.
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- 42 'FOKUS: Cara GAM Mengail Dana,' *Forum Keadilan*, No. 31, 5 November 2000, pp.80-86.
- 43 Interviews in Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta. An Aceh-based official cited in interview notes provided to the author. See also John McBeth, Nate Thayer & Bertil Lintner, 'Worse to Come', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 29 July 1999.
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- 45 Justin Morozzi, 'Rest, work and play by the gun: Firearms ownership, dealership and production are routine in sleepy Danao', *Financial Times*, 19 April 1997.
- 46 Interview with Philippines Ambassador to Cambodia, H. E. Francisco Atayde, Phnom Penh, 22 February 2001; Disraeli Y. Parreño, 'Danao City big supplier of Yakuza guns', *Manila Chronicle*, 21 January 1995, p.183. On an alleged weapons-for-drugs partnership between Abu Sayyaf and the Hong Kong 14-K crime syndicate, see Donna S. Cueto, 'Abu links to int'l drug ring probed', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 17 July 2000.
- 47 Gracia & Cascolan, 'PCTC Paper', pp.17-19.
- 48 *Ibid*, p.20.
- 49 BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 11 January 2000, FE/D3734/S1.
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- 52 'Libya-trained rebels blamed for current Aceh violence', *The Jakarta Post*, 30 July 1999; Cathy Rose A. Garcia & Manolette C. Payumo, 'MILF tells gov't to choose: Talk peace or resume war', *Business World*, 22 February 2000.
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- 55 Rahul Bedi, 'Turf wars muddy the waters of Indian intel', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 March 1999, p.38.
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- 58 *Ibid*.
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Chapter 4

- 1 Interviews with Mohd Shahrul Nizam bin Umar, Research Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dk Pg Dalo Shariffuddin Shazainah, Research Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei-Darussalam. The interviews took place at a regional conference on small arms in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 19 February 2001.
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- 4 James Coflin, *Small Arms Brokering: Impact, Options for Controls and Regulations*, report prepared for the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, (Ottawa, May 2000), p.11.
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- 8 Vachon & Nov, 'Unreliable Gun Statistics'.
- 9 The study was problematic, however, as it was carried out by government officials to whom many people would not admit they owned unregistered guns. Interview with Cambodian government official, Phnom Penh, 19 February 2001.
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- 17 Forecast International, *Ordnance and Munitions Forecast* (Newtown, Connecticut, 2000), pp.11-12; see also their 'Military Sidearms' section in *Ordnance and Munitions Forecast* (January 2000), p.5.
- 18 Interviews with Major-General Nem Sowath, Deputy Director of Defense Services, Ministry of National Defence, Phnom Penh, 18 February 2001, and with Cambodian Interior Ministry officials.
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- 30 Brig. Gen (ret) Henny van der Graaf, Project Manager, EU-ASAC, untitled presentation to the ASEAN Regional Forum Seminar on Conventional Weapons Transfers and Small Arms, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 21 February 2001, p.3.
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- 46 Personal observation, Phnom Penh, April 1997 and again in February 2001.
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- 48 Lon Nara & Phelim Kyne, 'Handgun brings travel ban for top official's daughter', *The Cambodian Daily*, 21 March 2001; Kevin Doyle, 'S'pore Gun Arrest Brings Issue to Forefront', *The Cambodian Daily*, 22 March 2001. This was not the first incident involving Cambodian officials. In April 1999 RCAF Deputy Commander-in-Chief Kun Kim was temporarily banned from Singapore after being found with a pistol in his briefcase at Changi airport.
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- 60 *Ibid.*, pp.147-148.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p.137.
- 62 Ezell, *Small Arms Today*, p.113.
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- 75 Hogg, *Jane's Gun Recognition Guide*, p.366.
- 76 Habib says that Pindad modified the FNC to suit 'the special conditions specified by the users and the local environment'. 'Indonesia's Defence Industries', 92. According to one senior TNI officer, the barrel on the SS1-V1 has been altered slightly to make it better able to function in the difficult conditions experienced in tropical jungle environment. Interview with an Indonesian army colonel, Singapore, October 2000; in a newspaper article published in Singapore in 1995, then Defence and Security Minister Edi Sudradjat said the FNCs had been 'adjusted to the size of Indonesian armed forces members. They are short and light.' See Jacob, 'No rifle deals with Australia: Jakarta'. *Jane's Infantry Weapons* also notes that the muzzle velocities of the SS-1 differ from the Belgian FNC, but says these likely reflect difference in the Indonesian propellant. *Jane's Infantry Weapons, 1999-2000*, p.163.

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- 78 *Ibid.*
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- 91 Interview with Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Jeanne Mandagi, Jakarta, 23 November 2000.
- 92 'Illicit trafficking and Production of Light Weapons' information sheet dated 28 April 1999, provided to the author by Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Jeanne Mandagi, Indonesian Police, Jakarta, 23 November 2000.
- 93 A list of the 'very selective individuals that are allowed to possess and use a firearm' is provided in a conference paper by Brig. Gen (Ret.) Jeanne Mandagi. According to the list these select individuals include (as typed) 'Government officials like Cabinet Ministers, Secretary General, Inspector General, Director General of a Ministry, Governor of a Province, Members of Parliament; Official of the Military/Police, with the rank of Colonel/Senior Superintendent, who has a special task; President Directors, President Commissioner, Directors and Commissioners of important Companies and Banks; Retired Military/Police, officials, with the rank of General, or Colonel who has an important job within the Government office/Private Companies.' Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Jeanne Mandagi, 'Illicit Trafficking of Firearms and Control Measures', paper presented to the International Conference on Small Arms Proliferation and Trade in the Asia-Pacific, Sofitel Cambodiana Hotel, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 19-20 February 2001.
- 94 Devi Asmarani, 'Suharto's daughter falls afoul of gun laws', *The Straits Times*, 24 November 2000.
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- 106 'FOKUS: Cara GAM Mengali Dana', *FORUM Keadilan*, No. 31, 5 November 2000.
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- 114 John McBeth, Nate Thayer & Bertil Lintner, 'Worse to Come', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 29 July 1999, pp.16, 18.
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- 217 Interview with Abdul Hadi Lochman. Given that Pakistan has its own large small arms production capacity, and is itself an exporter of these weapons, it is possible that Pakistan was not the final destination for the Steyrs.
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- 219 *Ibid*
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- 243 Bermana, 'All four stolen Steyr automatic rifles recovered', 19 January 2000.
- 244 *Ibid.* Ghazemy Mahmood, 'Security Tightened at Military Weapons Stores', Bermana News Agency, 19 January 2000; M. Jeffri Razali, 'No cover-up of arms thefts', *New Straits Times*, 4 February 2000.
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- 248 Interviews with informed sources, Kuala Lumpur, 18 October 2000.
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Chapter 5

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Glossary

Ammunition: The assembled components of complete cartridges or rounds; i.e. a case or shell holding a primer, a charge of propellant (gunpowder) and a projectile (bullets in the case of handguns and rifles—multiple pellets or single slugs in shotguns).

Automatic: A firearm designed to feed cartridges, fire them, eject their empty cases and repeat this cycle as long as the trigger is depressed and cartridges remain in the feed system. Examples: machine guns, submachine guns, selective-fire military/police rifles, including true assault rifles.

Ball: Originally a spherical projectile, now generally a fully jacketed bullet of cylindrical profile with a round or pointed nose.

Blank Cartridge: A round loaded with blackpowder or a special smokeless powder but lacking a projectile; used mainly in exercises and training.

Bolt-action: A gun mechanism activated by manual operation of the breech-block that resembles a common door bolt.

Bullet: The projectile expelled from a gun. Bullets can be of many materials, shapes, weights, and constructions such as solid lead, lead with a jacket of harder metal, round-nosed, flag-nosed, hollow-pointed, etc.

Calibre: The nominal diameter of a projectile of a rifled firearm or the diameter between the lands in a rifled barrel. In the US, usually expressed in hundredths of an inch; in Great Britain in thousandths; in Europe and elsewhere in millimetres.

Carbine: A rifle with a relatively short barrel.

Cartridge: A single, complete round of ammunition.

Handgun: Synonym for pistol.

Jacket: The envelope enclosing the core of a bullet. Not to be confused with the cartridge, which encloses the bullet (jacketed or not) and the propellant.

Machine Gun: A firearm of military significance, often crew-served, that on trigger depression automatically feeds and fires cartridges of rifle size or greater.

Magazine: A spring-loaded container for cartridges that may be an integral part of the gun's mechanism or may be detachable. Box magazines are most commonly located under the receiver with the cartridges stacked vertically. Tube or tubular magazines run through the stick or under the barrel with the cartridges lying horizontally. Drum magazines hold their cartridges in a circular mode.

Parabellum: A German tradename used for the 9mm Parabellum or Luger pistol and its ammunition. From the Latin 'Si Vis Pacem, Para Bellum' meaning 'if you wish peace, prepare for war'.

Pistol: Synonymous with 'handgun'; gun generally held in one hand. It may be of the single-shot, multi-barrel, repeating or semi-automatic variety and includes revolvers.

Primer: The ignition component of a cartridge, generally made up of a metallic fulminate.

Propellant: In a firearm, the chemical composition that is ignited by the primer to generate gas. In airguns, the compressed air or carbon dioxide gas.

Receiver: The main body of the gun and the housing for a firearm's breech and firing mechanism.

Revolver: Usually a handgun, with a multi-chambered cylinder that rotates to successively align each chamber with a single barrel and firing pin.

Rimfire: A rimmed or flanged cartridge with the priming mixture located inside the rim of the case. The most famous example is the .22 rimfire.

Round: Synonym for a cartridge.

Selective fire: A firearm's ability to be fired fully automatically, semi-automatically or, in some cases, in burst-fire mode at the option of the firer.

Semi-automatic: A firearm designed to fire a single cartridge, eject the empty case and reload the chamber each time the trigger is pulled.

Sub-machine gun: A fully automatic firearm commonly firing pistol ammunition intended for close-range combat.

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The cover illustration is of the busy harbour of Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, an important transit point in the illicit arms trade from Southeast Asia.