



The gun as a symbol: An Iraqi woman holds a Kalashnikov automatic rifle during a pro-Saddam Hussein demonstration in Baghdad, in January 2003. (© AP/Hussein Malla)

# From Chaos to Coherence?

## GLOBAL FIREARM STOCKPILES

# 2

### INTRODUCTION

Many of the most acute small arms problems of 2003 arose from the seemingly simple issue of stockpile management and control. In the most extraordinary case, the loss of control over millions of small arms and light weapons helped undermine the stability of an entire country. A similar phenomenon appeared elsewhere as armed forces were deployed to defend civilian airliners against weapons originally from their own inventories. Police faced much the same problem when pursuing criminals armed with former police guns. The situation is not very different for individuals, fearful of attackers bent on stealing guns originally acquired for self-defence.

Behind the shared irony was a serious and fundamental problem: How should the international community, governments, and individuals best manage the safety of their small arms and light weapons? This chapter examines recent trends in international and national efforts to control small arms and light weapons stockpiles. Like the vignettes above, it portrays a world without clear trends. Small arms lawlessness in some regions bears no relationship to strong reforms elsewhere. Everything, it seems, is happening at once.

This chapter's major findings include:

- In the wake of Saddam Hussein's defeat, the Iraqi people found themselves in possession of at least 7 million–8 million small arms, and probably more.
- Eleven Latin American countries examined here have roughly 45 million–80 million firearms. Their firearms stand out not for their numbers but for their lethal effects.
- At least one million firearms are stolen or lost annually worldwide.
- Firearms losses through negligence and theft range from enormous incidents involving armed forces to small-scale burglary from private homes.
- Small arms registration can be *active-universal*, requiring the participation of all gun owners, or *passive-partial*, involving only registration of newly bought guns.
- The most ambitious active-universal registration initiative in recent years came into full legal force in Canada in 2003.
- Brazil implemented a major reform package to combat firearms proliferation and radically alter the national gun culture.

Readers will notice that this chapter departs from the Stockpiles chapters in previous editions of this yearbook. In the 2004 edition it focuses less on the number and distribution of small arms and light weapons and more on their management. Instead of stressing who has what, it focuses on the problems of safely storing and keeping control of what they have. One could be excused for feeling that small arms violence shows the limits of efforts to exercise control over human affairs. As a partial corrective, the chapter stresses the enormous scope for better stockpile management.

Iraq may be an extreme case of gun chaos, but it is special only in its scale and suddenness. The catastrophic loss of major arsenals has occurred elsewhere before. Unless aggressive steps are taken to ensure better control over small arms stockpiles, many countries will remain vulnerable to similar disasters. On a daily basis, however, the gradual loss of weapons from negligence and theft may be an even more serious problem.

In addition to its familiar task of detailing the global distribution of small arms and light weapons inventories, this chapter also looks at the management of firearm stockpiles. The importance of better managing inventories of MANPADS is stressed in the following chapter. Both cases highlight how better management depends fundamentally on owners, be they powerful states, weak governments, private firms, or individuals. By coincidence, the same year that saw an unprecedented collapse of government control in one country also saw the enactment of some of the furthest-reaching government reforms in other countries.

## IRAQ'S ABANDONED ARSENAL

In 2003 Iraq became synonymous with gun-bred disaster. For a remotely similar case one must look back to the collapse of control over Albanian state arsenals in 1997. That event contributed to the escalation of fighting in neighbouring Kosovo and Macedonia. In Iraq, the lost arsenals were much larger and the effects may be as well.

Inspired by fear of weapons of mass destruction and fought largely with major conventional weaponry, the Iraq war created a situation little considered in pre-war rhetoric. Criminals, militias, guerrillas, and ordinary Iraqis armed with the smallest of weapons suddenly determined the prospects for peace and stability. For US-led coalition soldiers struggling to restore order, the greatest threat seemed to come from poorly understood groups of Ba'athist loyalists and militant Sunni Islamists. But for typical Iraqis it was the millions of firearms suddenly released into a chaotic social landscape—weapons in their own hands—which made life intolerable, even for those newly armed.

As the forces of Saddam Hussein collapsed in April 2003, little was left of his armies besides one of the largest military small arms inventories in the world. With a large proportion of these weapons already gone and much of the rest unguarded, the collapse precipitated what almost certainly was one of the largest and fastest transfers of small arms ever. Guns were littered among a tense population deprived of essential social institutions. The decision by Interim Administrator Paul Bremer in May 2003 to disband the Iraqi army and remove Ba'ath Party members from positions of authority further accelerated the transfer of weapons into civil society (Taheri, 2003).

The immediate result was unprecedented social disorder. The incidence of firearm homicides in Baghdad rose dramatically, including revenge attacks and more ordinary crime (Fleishman, 2003). The violence became a major barrier to the restoration of legitimate authority. In the long term, these events created an enormous pool of weaponry with the potential to spill uncontrollably through Iraqi society and across its borders. The effects are compounded by the geographic location of the country at the centre of the region. The consequences of the great Iraqi small arms abandonment may endanger stability in much of the Middle East for years to come.

From the beginning of the occupation, small arms and light weapons issues were a major preoccupation for US and other foreign forces. Highly publicized efforts to collect Iraqi small arms had limited success. This created an atmosphere of official and public scepticism about the prospects for control. Experience elsewhere, examined in

several studies in previous editions of the *Small Arms Survey* (Small Arms Survey, 2002, ch. 7; 2003, ch. 8), leaves no doubt that controlling small arms proliferation will be an essential part of efforts to rebuild the country.

In Iraq, millions of firearms suddenly flooded a chaotic social landscape.

### How many guns were released into public hands?

Although the Iraqi situation is especially acute, the problems of stockpile assessment are virtually identical to those in much of the rest of the world. The lack of a pre-war firearm registration system and the destruction of military records make it impossible to establish the exact number of small arms in Iraq. As shown in the subsequent section, for example, the situation is not very different in much of Latin America.

Previously developed to estimate the scale of national small arms inventories, formal estimating techniques can help establish a sense of the size of the problem that future Iraqi leaders will have to face (Small Arms Survey, 2001, pp. 80–81). They offer a tentative basis for the design of new Iraqi small arms policies as well as collection and disarmament initiatives. Until country surveys and smaller studies make stronger evaluations possible, this approach offers a useful guide to one of the most important unintended consequences of the Iraq war.

Even before combat officially began on 19/20 March 2003, there was little reliable information on the scale of small arms distribution in the country. The post-war gun situation created intense interest in establishing the scale of the problem. In the absence of reliable official data, early estimates were more evocative than analytical. They spoke more of the social impact of the problem than its physical dimensions.

This chapter works with reports and information that have become publicly available since then to establish what can be known in the murkiness of Iraqi small arms stockpiles. Its findings should be treated cautiously. They give a sense of scale rather than a precise total. Based on the information publicly available as of March 2004, it can be concluded with reasonable certainty that the Iraqi people currently control at least 7 million–8 million firearms. This estimate is conservative, reflecting the profound uncertainty permeating Iraqi society. The actual number of small arms in Iraq could be much higher, but there currently is no scientific basis for establishing the higher range of such an estimate.

At the conservative level established here, equal to 30 civilian firearms for every 100 people, the Iraqi people are highly but not exceptionally well-armed. If this estimate is correct, the country's public stockpile is higher than Canada or New Zealand with approximately 25 civilian firearms for every 100 residents, but lower than Finland where there are some 39 per 100 residents, or Uruguay where there appear to be roughly 25–46 civilian guns per 100 residents (Small Arms Survey, 2001, 2003). Where Iraq stands out most is not in the magnitude of its public stockpile so much as the suddenness with which it fell upon a fragile society.

Where Iraq stands out most is not in the magnitude of its public stockpile so much as the suddenness with which it fell upon a fragile society.

### The firearms of the pre-war Iraqi armed forces

While the former Iraqi regime did not make public the size of its official small arms inventory, its broad dimensions can be deduced with the use of orthodox multipliers. The country's armed forces reached their peak size around 1989 with approximately one million soldiers (IISS, 1989). If armed at the higher level typical of modern militaries, this force needed an average of at least 2.25 firearms—pistols, rifles, light and medium machine guns—for each soldier, sailor, and airman (Box 2.1). With roughly one million personnel in uniform at its peak, this created a basic operational requirement for approximately 2.25 million firearms.

Active-duty forces made up just part of Iraqi force planning. The basic national reserve was the People's Army, a paramilitary force estimated to number roughly 850,000 (IISS, 1989). Press reports generated by the Ba'ath Party in the

weeks just before the invasion suggested that this and other militias were far more numerous, but this cannot be independently confirmed. Assuming the same multiplier—in this case a generous one—of 2.25 for each reserve soldier, and combining this figure with figures for the regular army, suggests that the combined active-duty and trained reserve forces probably controlled at least 4.2 million firearms. Many of these largely military weapons were abandoned, pilfered, looted, and sold to the Iraqi public after Saddam Hussein’s defeat and disappearance around 9–11 April 2003.

In lieu of reliable data from the records of the pre-war Iraqi Ministry of Defence or its suppliers, it is hard to refine this estimate. The actual weapons total could be considerably higher. Just before the 2003 war began, for example, large numbers of weapons reportedly were distributed to Ba’athists and loyalist factions (Fisher, 2003). In addition to the firearms enumerated here, moreover, the Iraqi armed forces had vast inventories of other small arms and light weapons. These included hand grenades, mortars, heavy machine guns, MANPADS, and RPGs. Many or most were lost the same way as military firearms. Although these weapons are no less important, their quantities currently cannot be estimated. They have not been included here.

Iraq’s civilian and military firearms stockpile is conservatively estimated at between 7 million and 8 million. It is likely to be considerably higher.

**Box 2.1 Arming militia-based armed forces: The example of Finland**

The estimating procedures established by the *Small Arms Survey* in 2001 to gauge the likely dimensions of military firearms inventories were based on a handful of examples. The resulting military small arms multiplier was 2.25 firearms for every man or woman in uniform. The examples available then were regular, standing armed forces from the Cold War era. Although dated, the approach harbours an underlying truth; even though most countries have reduced their militaries since then, their old equipment remains somewhere, unless destroyed (Small Arms Survey, 2001, pp. 73–74).

In reality, not all countries are armed at the same level. Reserve forces, which can be very large, are especially distinctive. The differences are especially acute for countries that rely largely on militia-based formations. Data released from the Swiss Ministry of Defence offered unprecedented insights into one well-known militia-based national defence force (Small Arms Survey, 2002, pp. 78–79). In 2003 the Ministry of Defence of Finland offered new insights by providing detailed information about the firearms under its control as well.

In a letter to the Small Arms Survey dated 21 August 2003, the Ministry reported that the combined firearms of all the Finnish armed services amounted to approximately 531,000 weapons (see Table 2.1). These were allocated among a combined force of 27,000 active-duty personnel and some 435,000 reservists, for a combined ratio of 1.15 firearms for every uniformed officer, conscript, and reservist (IISS, 2003).

Although Finland depends on a militia-based defence force much like Switzerland, its weapons policies are quite different. Unlike Switzerland, Finnish military personnel are issued arms exclusively when on active duty or official exercises. At other times weapons are stored in locked depots, not at home. Each weapon is always in an individual’s possession or responsibility. Retiring personnel are not allowed to keep their service weapons. Excess or obsolescent equipment is destroyed, sold, or donated.

**Table 2.1 Finnish military firearms, August 2003**

Type	Quantity
Self-loading pistols	8,000
Sniper rifles	4,500
Sub-machine guns	1,000
Assault rifles	510,000
Light machine guns	7,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>531,000</b>

Sources: Letter from Pauli Järvenpää, Director General, Finnish Ministry of Defence, Helsinki, 21 August 2003; figures from IISS (2003, p. 72).

Although Finland depends on a militia-based defence force much like Switzerland, its weapons policies are quite different.

### Well-armed under dictatorship: Pre-war Iraqi civilian ownership

To this total of at least 4.2 million firearms lost by the Iraqi military, privately owned firearms already in civilian hands before the war began must be added. The obvious assumption is that an authoritarian regime would tightly control public access to guns (Jackman, 2003). Surprisingly perhaps, compared with common assumptions about life under an authoritarian dictatorship, pre-war Iraq appears to have had relatively permissive ownership laws. Although gun ownership was not high by international standards, it was not unusually low either. Iraq reinforces the broader conclusion that gun policy is rarely straightforward, even in tightly controlled societies.

For politically loyal Sunnis, the Iraqi government reportedly made licences easily available. According to one report, the greatest barrier to civilian gun ownership before the war was the USD 150 licence fee (King, 2003). This entitled licence holders to buy as many weapons as they pleased from legally licensed dealers. Even before the war, it reportedly was normal for households, even in urban centres like Baghdad, to have several guns (Mite, 2003).

Other groups were able to acquire weaponry, but at greater effort and with varying success. Kurds were able to arm themselves extensively through well-organized smuggling and deals with corrupt officials. Iraqi Shi'ites were more isolated, but still appear to have acquired large numbers of firearms from illegal sources. Shi'ite ownership certainly became much more common after the end of Ba'athist rule. One report noted, 'Every household in (predominantly Shi'ite) Basra has two or three guns', including weapons from before as well as those taken after the collapse of Army resistance (*The Economist*, 2003). Another maintains that the average Basra household now has two to four guns (Jadwa, 2003).

Although exact data are not available, it appears that even under Saddam Hussein, public firearm ownership was commonplace, especially but certainly not exclusively among the Sunni minority. If officially oppressed Shi'ites were able to acquire guns relatively easily, the total number of firearms in the hands of Iraqi civilians compares to the situation in Lebanon and Jordan. In those countries, with historically similar per capita wealth and gun cultures, public ownership is estimated at roughly 15–25 guns per 100 people (Jackman, 2003).

Among a population of some 24 million Iraqis, the lower standard would equal a pre-war civilian arsenal (excluding the armed forces) of around 3.2 million firearms or more. Again, this figure should be used as a starting point for understanding a public weapon inventory that almost certainly was larger, even before the war. Iraq's combined civilian and military small arms stockpile can be conservatively estimated at between 7 million and 8 million firearms, with the potential to be considerably higher.

### Unquenchable thirst? Rising supply and demand

A distinctive aspect of the Iraqi situation was the speed with which demand rose to meet supply. Although a cornucopia of weaponry fell into civilian hands, prices only collapsed very briefly and quickly recovered. Iraqi demand for firearms, in other words, quickly rose to meet supply. A well-armed society had remarkable ability to absorb a weapons windfall and keep looking for more. Despite the difficult social conditions of post-war Iraqi society, though, demand did not rise as fast as some press coverage might have implied. Prices at Iraqi markets appear to have stabilized at levels close to what they were before the war began on 19 March, generally USD 200–300 for an automatic rifle. Prices never reached the extremes seen in other regions in the midst of violent conflict, such as Kashmir or Palestine, where automatic weapons can trade for USD 2,000 to 3,000 or more (Small Arms Survey, 2002, pp. 66; 2003, pp. 90–91).

The prices quoted to foreign reporters are not uniformly consistent. But general trends emerge from a review of the many reports. News reports from various Iraqi cities and markets in the month before the invasion show that the price of an AK-47

Pre-war Iraq had surprisingly permissive ownership laws for an authoritarian dictatorship.

The Iraqi people controlled a pre-war civilian arsenal of around 3.2 million privately owned weapons.

varied greatly, but stayed within the USD 150–300 range (Badkhen, 2003). During the worst disorder of March–April 2003, prices may have collapsed for a few weeks as military inventories flooded the market. According to one report, in Basra so many rifles appeared that they briefly became worthless (Jadwa, 2003). Prices appear to have dipped as resistance collapsed in Baghdad, falling to USD 25–150 in April and May, before returning to old levels a few weeks later (Glauber, 2003; Soriano, 2003).

After the temporary collapse of prices in April, there were no more reports from Iraq comparable to African clichés of guns for the price of a chicken. Most impressive perhaps, the flood of weapons created additional demand. Prices appear to have recovered quickly as these weapons were absorbed. Especially revealing about the priorities of Iraqi buyers, the steadiest prices appear to have been for second-hand pistols. These are easily concealed, making them often more desirable than automatic rifles for personal protection. According to one report, handgun prices remained steadier at about USD 150–400, depending on model and condition (Schaffer, 2003).



Unsecured weapons: A US Army soldier studies a gun found during a raid in Baghdad in November 2003.

© Joe Raedle/Getty Images

**Iraqi demand for firearms quickly rose to meet supply. So strong was public demand that imported small arms soon began flowing into Iraq.**

Six months after the conquest of Baghdad, foreign reporters routinely noted Kalashnikov prices in the range of USD 200–300 (Murphy, 2003; Prothero, 2003). This suggests that the uncontrolled stock of ex-army weapons was gone, some of it destroyed by occupying Coalition forces, but most absorbed by the civilian market. So strong was Iraqi demand that, by the early summer, foreign small arms reportedly began to flow into Iraq, especially through Iran and Syria (Filipov, 2003). Subsequent reports maintain that this flow has continued, despite Coalition efforts to close the border (Hider, 2004). The strongest demand comes from the newly created militias of religious, regional, and political leaders. Their total membership in early 2004 was estimated at about 110,000 combatants (Kahwaji, 2004). Their requirements, though, are swamped by the huge public consumption.

The strength of public demand for guns reminds us of the limits of our knowledge of the situation in Iraq. Does unsatisfied public demand suggest that the collapse of the armed forces released fewer weapons than commonly assumed? Or might it imply that Iraqi demand is virtually limitless under current conditions of insecurity?

### Re-establishing Iraqi security services

One of the most enigmatic aspects of Iraq's pre-war official small arms stockpile was the role of the police, intelligence services, and other internal security agencies. The most important key to estimating their weapons inventories—their manpower figures—is not known. Clearly, their arsenals were ransacked with the same thoroughness as elsewhere. Whether their weapons were pilfered by absconding staff or taken by ordinary looters, virtually nothing was left (Matthews, 2003). Given the absence of information on former levels of these stockpiles, however, they cannot be included in our estimate of total Iraqi stockpiles.

Ironically, re-establishing the police and the armed forces requires importing guns, since there no longer are state inventories to work with. The same phenomenon has been seen before in Afghanistan, the Balkans, Haiti, and Somalia. The new Iraqi police force initially planned to include roughly 85,000 sworn officers. Other security forces are to have a combined total of 50,000 troops (Cha, 2004). According to the former New York City police commissioner in charge of the project, 150,000 Glock-19 police pistols are being imported in 2003–4 (Filkins, 2003; Pruden, 2003). In addition, 50,000 AK-47s were purchased from Jordan, ordered by the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority to arm the newly created army, the Iraqi Civil Defence Corps (Matthews, 2003).

### The problematic legacy of war: Unique in scale, not in type

Despite all the chaos and subsequent imports, the scale of the Iraqi arsenal is probably much the same; mostly it is its distribution that has changed. The collapse of civil authority created innumerable opportunities for a well-armed population to acquire even more weaponry. Previously oppressed Shi'ites, for example, acquired just as much equipment as did their erstwhile oppressors. In place of an exceptionally well-armed state, the world now must deal with a heavily-armed society.

The pre-war civilian arsenal, estimated at a minimum of 3.2 million privately owned guns, was augmented by at least 4.2 million former military weapons. Hundreds of thousands of former police and intelligence service weapons should also be included, although their numbers still cannot be estimated. Nor is much known about the total number of light weapons such as RPG-7s. As noted above, additional quantities of foreign-supplied weapons continue to flow into the country as well.

In relative terms, the figure of at least 7 million–8 million firearms now in civilian hands is equal to at least 30 for every 100 residents. Although imprecise, this range leaves little doubt of how Iraqi society has been transformed. What used to be a typically armed Middle East society has become one of the more heavily armed places in the world. This public stockpile, so suddenly reinforced, is a major element in Iraq's social and political problems. It seems inevitable that significant quantities will haemorrhage into neighbouring countries as well.

US-led efforts to deal with the problem through post-conflict disarmament were too little, too late. Many small arms and light weapons, plus ammunition, were seized from government arsenals by Coalition troops during the



An Iraqi police officer accepts Glock handguns from US soldiers in Tikrit in February 2004.

© Stan Honda/AFP/Getty Images

occupation. But most of the country's stockpile had already fallen into private hands. Coalition arms seizures did little to keep the situation from deteriorating.

Small arms problems in Iraq are not of a unique type. What makes them stand out is their unique scale and suddenness.

Less tangible results came through an aggressive disarmament programme aimed at Iraqi civilians. This appears to have caught few guns. It did more to get weapons off the streets. Critics have argued that such measures were unethical, hindering legitimate efforts at self-protection (Lott, 2003b). But, much like similar measures in other post-conflict environments such as Kosovo and Sierra Leone, they seem to have reduced crime and intimidation, even if there was little impact on total public ownership (AP, 2003c). This reaffirms the lessons about small arms problems previously learned from post-conflict situations as diverse as El Salvador and Sierra Leone. It strengthens the conclusion that events in Iraq are not of a unique type. What makes them stand out is their unique scale and suddenness.

## LATIN AMERICA: LETHAL STOCKPILES AND WEAK STATES

What happened in Iraq was special in scale and suddenness, but in many respects it was typical of small arms problems today. Latin America and the Caribbean have gradually developed a firearm problem of even greater severity. The region loses between 73,000 and 90,000 victims killed by firearms annually. Of these, between 69,500 and 84,000 are homicides (CRIME). The level of firearm death, overwhelmingly from homicide, easily surpasses the fatalities of the 2003 Iraq war, which according to a prominent study cost between 11,000 and 15,000 Iraqi combatant and non-combatant deaths from all types of weapons (Conetta, 2003).

With a combined population of 464 million people, the 11 Latin American countries examined here have a total of about 45 million–80 million firearms.

With an average of 16 firearm homicides per 100,000 residents for the entire region, the regional frequency of violent firearm use appears to be the highest in the world. Of the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, at least eight endure firearm homicide rates that kill more than 10 out of every 100,000 residents every year (CRIME). Several other regions are home to one or more countries affected by exceptional gun problems, such as South Africa and Albania. Latin America stands out as the only part of the world where so many such countries are packed together in a single region.

The firearm problems of Latin America have encouraged exceptional vision and activism, pushing the region to the forefront of international efforts to deal with small arms proliferation. It was a Latin American initiative (sponsored by Colombia) that first won United Nations support for the issue in 1993. The region is home to the most widely ratified international treaty to restrain illegal small arms transfers and has done more than any other to promote better policy among its governments. It also hosts a United Nations office in Lima, Peru, focusing on these issues, as well as scores of concerned NGOs.

Despite Latin America's leadership on these international issues, its domestic policies often leave much to be desired. The Latin American experience shows that it is not enough to focus on international or regional aspects of small arms issues. As recognized in the 2001 UN *Programme of Action*, effective policy-making must work at the national level. It is at just this level that Latin American responses typically are the weakest.

Latin America does not have an exceptional number of guns. This conclusion emerged from a series of country studies and extensive interviews by the Small Arms Survey and the Brazilian NGO Viva Rio. This review focused on 11 countries—the ten largest South American countries and Mexico. With a combined population of more than 464 million people, these 11 countries have a total stockpile of approximately 45 million–80 million firearms. This includes all the firearms of civilians and government institutions. The greatest source of ambiguity is poor knowledge of unregistered civilian gun ownership, which can only be estimated (see Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2** Distribution of firearms in 11 Latin American countries, 2003

Country	Civilian registered	Total civilian unregistered	Armed forces firearms	Official police firearms
Argentina	2,597,122	(1,500,000-3,000,000)	609,000	214,000
Bolivia	-	85,000-340,000	21,000-51,000	164,000
Brazil	5,000,000	15,000,000-25,000,000	3,000,000	565,000
Chile	649,524	750,000-1,300,000	480,000	36,000
Colombia	670,000	3,500,000-9,500,000	(522,000)	(125,000)
Ecuador	39,537	(200,000)-500,000	250,000	24,000
Mexico	1,494,321	(2,000,000)-15,000,000	1,000,000	425,000
Paraguay	320,906	(400,000-700,000)	(135,000)	(34,000)
Peru	241,000	(250,000-750,000)	(638,000)	(110,000)
Uruguay	570,000	(300,000-1,000,000)	80,000	30,000
Venezuela	-	1,200,000-6,000,000	250,000	112,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,582, 410</b>	<b>25,000,000-60,000,000</b>	<b>7,000,000</b>	<b>1,800,000</b>

Notes: Figures in normal type are official, those in brackets are estimates made by officials interviewed, and those in italics are Small Arms Survey-Viva Rio estimates. For Colombia, the small arms of insurgents and paramilitaries are included in civilian unregistered.

Sources: Country background papers by Small Arms Survey and Viva Rio, and Viva Rio interviews with government officials in 11 national capitals

Some trends correspond to common assumptions about social conditions. Other countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru have much lower civilian ownership rates. In these three countries it is possible that official small arms outnumber those of civilians; the data are not accurate enough to be certain. Often overlooked Uruguay, on the other hand, may be one of the most heavily armed countries anywhere. The regional average is equal to approximately 8–16 civilian firearms for every 100 people (see Table 2.3). This is far behind the United States with approximately 83–96 guns for every 100 people. It is more comparable to Western Europe, home to an average of 17.4 guns for every 100 residents (Small Arms Survey, 2003, p. 64).

**Table 2.3** Estimated total civilian firearms in 11 Latin American countries, 2003

Country	Population	Estimated civilian firearms (millions)	Firearms/100 people
Argentina	38,400,000	4.1-5.6	11-15
Bolivia	8,800,000	0.09-0.3	1-4
Brazil	178,500,000	20.0-30.0	11-17
Chile	15,800,000	1.4-2.0	9-12
Colombia	44,200,000	4.0-10.0	10-23
Ecuador	13,000,000	0.2-0.5	2-4
Mexico	103,500,000	3.5-16.5	4-17
Paraguay	5,900,000	0.7-1.0	12-17
Peru	27,200,000	0.5-1.0	2-4
Uruguay	3,400,000	0.9-1.6	25-46
Venezuela	25,700,000	1.2-6.0	5-23
<b>Total</b>	<b>464,400,000</b>	<b>36.0-74.0</b>	<b>8-16</b>

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Sources: Population from United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2003); firearm data from Table 2.2

All the governments surveyed here require firearm licensing and registration. Even so, illegal ownership is the norm, a reflection of the weakness of most Latin American states. Altogether no more than 30–45 per cent of civilian guns appear to be registered (see Table 2.2). The rest are illegally held, constituting a large reservoir for crime and violence. This may help explain the exceptional lethality of the region's small arms, perhaps the most startling finding of this review. The dangers are worst in countries with the largest proportion of unregistered guns—notably Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and possibly Bolivia as well—although unreliable data inhibits strong correlations. The licensing system itself may exacerbate the problem, since regional laws typically allow licensees to carry a loaded weapon in public. Brazil has only just pioneered legislation rescinding this privilege.

Behind regional trends lie broad national differences. Public ownership is the greatest source of doubt about regional stockpiles. And problems with import data suggest that even seemingly reliable data should be used cautiously. The most ambiguous case is *Mexico*, where civilian gun ownership appears to be much higher than official figures, but how much higher is unclear. The Mexican Constitution says that the country's 103 million people have a right to own firearms (Mexico, 1968, 1:1, §10). Mexico's 1972 firearms law, however, has been interpreted to forbid much of the gun trade (Mexico, 1972). Most gun manufacturing is reserved to state arsenals (PRODUCERS). Legal gun shops have been closed and public ownership is legally limited to low-calibre weapons.

But international trade statistics open a window on a different Mexican reality. National import statistics reveal that Mexico received USD 7.9 million worth of firearms in 2000, the latest year available (Mexico, 2003). This is among the highest rate of importation for all of Latin America. Although Mexico does not report the number of small arms it imports, the quantities involved can be estimated using national trade statistics from other countries examined here. Among those Latin American countries that make complete data available—Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay—the average wholesale value of the small arms they import was USD 89–168 each, depending on the country. At these values, Mexico's legal small arms imports would amount to 47,000–88,000 annually. If they are typical, such imports seem difficult to reconcile with the official figure of fewer than 1.5 million registered guns, especially when one recalls the major role of Mexico's own domestic firearm industry (Dreyfus and Karp, 2003). Nor does this include illegal smuggling through the United States. The evidence strongly supports the conclusion that there are many more guns in Mexico than official figures indicate.

Uruguay illustrates a much more permissive gun culture. With approximately 570,000 firearms registered among its population of 3.4 million, its confirmed rate of legal ownership almost certainly is much higher than Mexico's. Here as well, though, doubts surround official data. Uruguayan national data shows that the country imported 4,928 small arms in 2000, and imports dropped dramatically as the economy crashed, falling to just 762 guns imported in 2002 (Uruguay, 2003). Even at the higher rate, such small imports are difficult to reconcile with the level of legal ownership. Local authorities estimate that Uruguayans have an additional 300,000 to one million unregistered guns (Dreyfus and Karp, 2003). While Uruguayan law is less restrictive, the realities of ownership are only somewhat less mysterious. In both Mexico and Uruguay, as in most countries of Latin America, official data are far from conclusive. One of the greatest sources of regional ambiguity appears to be the weakness of the state itself.

What is most distinctive about Latin American and Caribbean firearms is not their absolute number but their impressive *lethality* (see Table 2.4). Although the region as a whole does not have an exceptionally high level of firearm ownership, its firearms are used with remarkable deadliness. Stockpile 'lethality' here refers to the ratio of guns to gun homicides, the actual number of people killed with guns, or the likelihood that a typical firearm will be used to kill. It should not be confused with a quality inherent to a particular weapon, such as calibre or other indices of firepower.

**Table 2.4 The deadliest gun use: Stockpile lethality in nine Latin American countries**  
(with selected examples from elsewhere, ranked by highest gun lethality)

Country	Total civilian guns (millions)	Annual gun homicides	Gun homicides per 100,000 people	Guns per gun homicide	Gun homicides per 100,000 guns
Ecuador	0.2-0.5	1,321	10.16	150-380	260-660
Colombia	4.2-10.2	21,898	49.54	190-470	220-520
Venezuela	1.2-6.0	5,408	21.04	220-1,100	90-450
Brazil	20.0-30.0	25,603	14.35	780-1,170	85-128
Mexico	3.5-16.5	5,452	5.27	640-3,000	33-156
Argentina	4.1-5.6	942	2.45	4,350-5,940	17-23
Peru	0.5-1.0	161	0.59	3100-6,200	16-32
Uruguay	0.9-1.6	104	3.05	8,650-11,400	7-12
Chile	1.4-2.0	82	0.52	17,000-24,400	4.1-5.9
Jamaica	0.08-0.2	450	16.97	180-440	230-560
South Africa	4.5	13,572	30.17	330	302.0
United States	243.0-281.0	10,310	3.45	24,000-28,000	3.76-4.2
Canada	7.9	170	0.54	48,000	2.2
Germany	20.0-30.0	155	0.19	129,000-194,000	0.5-0.8

Note: The data in this figure come from different base years. While firearm statistics are for 2002-3, gun homicide data is from the most recent year available, usually 1998-2001, except for Jamaica, which is 1995. Bolivia and Paraguay were excluded for lack of specific firearms homicide data. Figures for guns/gun homicide and gun homicide/100,000 guns have been rounded to avoid false precision.

Sources: compiled from Table 2.1 and 2.2 above. Firearm homicide data from Chetty (2000); CRIME; UN (1998); UNODC (2003). Civilian stockpile data for other countries from Cross *et al.* (2003), GPC (2002), and Small Arms Survey (2002).

Not all countries in the region face egregious levels of criminal violence. Uruguay has the highest rate of public gun ownership in all of Latin America: at least 25 civilian guns per 100 inhabitants. It may be among the most heavily armed societies in the world if the higher estimate of 46 guns per 100 people is correct. In silent testimony to the stability of Uruguayan society, however, the country with the region's highest rate of gun ownership also has one of the lowest firearm homicide rates, at 3.05 per 100,000. This is about ten per cent lower than the rate in the United States. The lowest firearm homicide rates of all the countries surveyed here belong to Argentina, Chile (armed roughly at the regional average), and Peru (which has few firearms by international standards).

The situation is very different in Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Brazil (see Table 2.4). The high number of annual firearm homicides in these countries is well-known. Less commonly appreciated is the exceptional lethality of their small arms arsenals, the ratio of guns to gun homicides. The last two columns of Table 2.4 show the statistical likelihood that an average gun in these countries will be used to kill. They show that some guns are much more dangerous than others. The penultimate column shows, for each society, the ratio of guns to each gun homicide. In other words, how likely is it that any *individual gun* will be used to kill in an average year? The last column presents gun lethality in terms of homicides per 100,000 guns. This gives a sense of the comparative lethality of a country's *entire firearm stockpile*.

Because of uncertainty over the number of civilian firearms in all of the countries surveyed here, precise comparison is impossible. In Colombia, with a reputation as one of the most violent countries on the face of the planet, one out of every 190-470 guns can be expected to take a life every year. Put differently, the final column shows that, for every 100,000 Colombian firearms, an average of 220-520 people will die annually. In Ecuador the absolute number of gun homicides is much smaller, but so is the national firearm stockpile. As a result, Ecuadorian guns are a little deadlier than those in neighbouring Colombia.

What is most distinctive about Latin American and Caribbean firearms is not their absolute number but their impressive lethality.

Other cases are equally troubling; the examples of Jamaica and South Africa are included in Table 2.4 to give a sense of other extremes, as are examples from more peaceful societies. The others show just how serious the situation is in much of Latin America. Brazil and Germany, for example, appear to have roughly the same number of civilian-owned guns. But Brazil's firearm homicide rate is 165 times higher, and its guns are at least 110 to 250 times more likely to be used to kill. Such comparisons leave no doubt about the importance of better small arms policy to the security, welfare, and well-being of the region.

## STOCKPILE SECURITY: WHO'S MINDING THE STORE?



Sure it works: Demonstrating a pistol in a street gun market in Baghdad in May 2003.

© AP/Alexander Zemlianichenko

The Iraqi small arms problem, like the MANPADS problem described in Chapter 3, is a highly publicized example of a well-known phenomenon. Stockpile security is—or should be—a serious issue for all weapon owners. In Iraq it was stockpile security that failed completely. More typical problems are caused by less extreme breakdowns. Both government and private small arms owners face serious challenges in controlling their weapons inventories. Poor stockpile security contributes directly to illegal acquisition of small arms, providing a window through which legal guns enter the illicit circuit.

The scale of losses through negligence and theft can range from millions of small arms over a short space of time to a one-by-one trickle, but the effect can be much the same. Illegally acquired weaponry is especially dangerous, most likely to exacerbate criminal violence and armed conflict. Pilfered or stolen guns are rapidly transferred, feeding crime and conflict elsewhere.

### The risks for governments

Because governments keep the largest arsenals, they also face some of the greatest risks of losing stockpile control. In the most extreme examples, entire national arsenals are looted. Something similar to the Iraqi case happened in 1997 when Albania lost some 643,000 small arms and light weapons (Small Arms Survey, 2002, p. 76). Much the same happened in Somalia in 1991–2, when the government of Siad Barre collapsed and government arsenals were pillaged of several hundred thousand weapons by warring clans.

Government institutions can be more than passive victims in the process of diversion. Wilful neglect and official complicity may occur as official policy or when the convictions of well-placed officials lead to direct support for particular groups. In one of the largest examples on record, in 1991–3 the Russian military allowed new republics and non-recognized factions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to take 260,000 small arms from key bases. Some were transferred under official bilateral documents, but others were informally transferred by Russian regional commanders,

tacitly allowed to be taken, or stolen through bribery, extortion, or simple theft (Pyadushkin, 2003, p. 151). The movement of weaponry from poorly controlled military arsenals can directly influence the severity and outcome of armed conflict. In the Caucasus, it directly exacerbated the scale of the fighting and altered the politics of the region, encouraging organized crime and secession.

More common but still spectacular thefts tend to involve hundreds of weapons taken from government arsenals in raids by organized crime, terrorist cells, or rebel groups. For many insurgencies, raiding police stations or military facilities is a standard—but risky—way to acquire weaponry. A recent study of small arms in Southeast Asia provides numerous examples of such attacks. It shows that the armed forces of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand routinely lose hundreds of small arms in such incidents (Capie, 2002). The catastrophic loss of hundreds, thousands, or even millions of weapons in a short space of time galvanizes international attention and assures a response, however inadequate it may be. But innumerable smaller incidents are much more typical. Over time, their cumulative impact may be no less dangerous.

Because governments keep the largest arsenals, they also face some of the greatest problems of losing stockpile control.

### Large institutions and the danger of small losses

It is the explosive loss of vast quantities of small arms belonging to the armed forces, police, and other government agencies that gets the most attention. But such events, although far from rare, remain exceptional. In most of the world, it is the steady trickle of ordinary losses that releases the most small arms over time. In most countries, governments own considerably fewer small arms than civil society does. Their losses appear to be smaller as well. But, as constitutionally established organizations responsible for public welfare, they have a special responsibility. Losing their small arms to criminals or rebels is a betrayal of the social contract that establishes their authority.

Smaller-scale pilfering from official stocks can be equally dangerous. It was poorly secured government weapons from arsenals in the Pacific that provided the arms used to overthrow the elected government in Fiji and ignite civil war in the Solomon Islands. In Fiji only a few dozen rifles and pistols were lost, but in fragile societies this is enough to undermine social order and political stability. In the Solomon Islands, more than 1,000 military and police rifles were stolen (PACIFIC). Russian authorities say that the Russian army lost 8,000 stolen weapons from 1995 to 2001 (Shashkov, 2002). Other sources maintain that loss rates are much higher and that Russian government agencies have reported a total of 150,000 lost firearms during the same time period (Gusev, 2003).

Because of their special responsibilities, governments face harsh criticism for losing control. In an extreme example, Saudi Arabian officials reportedly discovered after a raid on 6 May 2003 that al Qaeda terrorists had acquired rifles, explosives, and ammunition from the Saudi Arabian National Guard (Finn, 2003). When similar matériel was used in a successful attack in Riyadh killing 34 people one week later, the culpability of the Saudi government ceased to be a purely academic question.

An illustration of the sensitivity of the issue came directly from the Saudi Interior Minister, Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz. He strongly denied allegations that al Qaeda armed itself out of government arsenals. The Saudi National Guard, he explained, did not use AK-47s and Czech explosives of the sort found in the May 2003 raids (AFP, 2003a; Saudi Arabia, 2003). Other sources have noted that the National Guard has long been armed with exactly this kind of equipment in its inventories (Metz, 1993). Indeed, the Kingdom reportedly purchased a 'large consignment' of former Soviet firearms less than two years earlier (Kazakh Commercial Television, 2001).

While the loss of a gun always is serious, the cause may not be calculated or intrinsically evil. Forgetfulness may be more of a factor than conspiracy. Employees of government agencies lose small arms from time to time, just as

they lose cars, laptop computers, and other valuable items through negligence or theft. German officials, for example, report that about 1,000 government-owned firearms are lost or stolen this way every year (UN, 1998, p. 84). The situation there hardly seems exceptional.

An investigation by the US General Accounting Office released in 2003 found that 18 US government agencies reported losing 1,012 small arms between September 1998 and July 2002. Losses included weapons belonging to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the US Customs Service, and the National Parks Service. Fewer than 20 per cent were ever recovered (US, GAO, 2000; Seper, 2003). The armed services have similar problems. The US Army has acknowledged the loss of 223 weapons—mostly small arms and explosives—since 1991 (Freedberg and Humburg, 2003). In August 2003, for example, two grenade launchers went missing from a New York Army depot. Negligence, not theft, was the likely explanation (Lemire, 2003).

Losses of dozens or hundreds of arms every year are hardly surprising given the scale of some official inventories. If the loss is quickly noted, corrective action can be taken. In countries where security is poor, losses of equipment can be much worse and may not be discovered for months or years. The problem has directly fuelled instability and fighting in the Pacific (Alpers and Twyford, 2003; Capie, 2003). In some states in Southeast Asia, most notoriously in Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, poor storage practices and lack of personal responsibility facilitate routine theft (Capie, 2002, pp. 31, 42, 76, 105). The problem is not confined to weapons in storage. Governments simply may have no idea of the disposition of the guns they own. In Uganda, according to one report, the government lacks any central information about an arsenal of 1.2 million small arms (Potgieter, 2003). When substandard monitoring and irregular discipline make it possible, impoverished soldiers will be tempted to sell their weapons and report them lost or stolen.

In poorer countries, where a small arm is often the most valuable item in an individual's immediate control, illegal sale is a serious problem. Army installations throughout the developing world must deal with a continuous risk that weapons will be sold by their own troops. Individual crimes often are small. In Malaysia, for example, soldiers were charged in 2003 with selling two M-16 rifles, three HK-P9S pistols, and ammunition (Simon, 2003). There was nothing special about the charge, which reflected a small part of a continuous problem. In the Philippines, the armed forces also have acknowledged a serious problem with systematic theft and illegal sales from government inventories (Guerrero, 2003).

Greed or ideology can be a stronger force than security. The Israeli Defence Forces have not been immune to allegations of personnel taking arms and ammunition to sell to Palestinian militants who may use them to kill Israelis. In 2002, Israeli military police reported that 160 guns and 361 hand grenades were stolen (AP, 2003b). Some of these items reportedly made their way to Palestinian militants (AP, 2003a). The scale of economically motivated malfeasance can rise astronomically when government officials misuse their positions to become arms brokers. In Thailand, military officials coordinate imports of small arms, some of which are cycled through official inventories before being sold on the black market (Davis, 2003).

For governments to lose their small arms to criminals or rebels is a betrayal of the social contract that establishes their authority.

### **The fate of old weapons**

Government agencies also face special responsibilities for their weapons, responsibilities that go beyond those they physically control. After they have been retired or decommissioned and disposed of, small arms previously owned by public institutions are just like any others in the public domain. Once used to protect the public, they can subsequently be misused by their new owners. As cheaper, second-hand models, these discards are especially likely to find their way to unsavoury owners.

By law or expectation, public security organizations have a special obligation to manage their weapons stockpiles. Increasingly this applies not just to their current weapons inventories but to their cast-offs as well. The discovery of a former police pistol in the pocket of a thug might not be considered a special police issue. But the responsibility to protect public safety has been applied to exactly such situations. Police departments and even military establishments used to routinely sell their old small arms to the public for extra income. As concepts of official responsibility expand, however, this practice is being challenged, although it still continues in much of the world.

Poor storage practices and the lack of personal responsibility facilitate pilfering and unexplained losses.

The catalyst for the largest series of police weapons trade-ins was an incident in Dade County, Florida, on 11 April 1986. Bank robbers with an assault rifle and high-calibre revolvers killed two FBI agents and wounded five (Anderson, 1996). In the wake of the tragedy, police forces in the United States and many other countries urgently switched from traditional revolvers to more powerful weapons, usually automatic pistols. To help finance the switch, manufacturers purchased the older police arms for resale.

After the FBI-Dade shoot-out, the Austrian firm Glock, for example, resold over 150,000 old police revolvers this way. Not all these guns stayed in responsible hands. As some began to turn up at crime scenes, police have been pressed to abandon the practice (Vobejda, Ottaway, and Cohen, 1999). Weak finances, though, make the practice hard to break. Trading-in old police guns to subsidize the acquisition of new ones remains normal practice in much of the world. In the US state of Missouri, for example, a former police Glock pistol was recovered from a crime scene in 2003. The gun had been traded-in only a few months before (Sloca, 2003a, 2003b).

Destroying old police and military firearms instead of reselling them often requires pressure and financial support from governing authorities. With extra assistance, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were able to destroy more than 20,000 surplus revolvers, old guns that previously would have been sold to the public (Canada, 2003). This approach remains far from universal, though, and many police forces continue to find it hard to turn down trade-in subsidies. Australian police in Queensland, for example, sought to stretch their rearmament budget by trading 3,674 older revolvers for a discount on 8,600 new Glock pistols. Despite extensive debate, in 2003 it was learned that state authorities had allowed the deal to go ahead (Parnell, 2003; private communication with Philip Alpers, 2003).

The catalyst for the largest police weapons trade-in was a fatal robbery in Florida in 1986.

### Eliminating surplus government weapons

The solutions to institutional small arms losses vary. For current weapons inventories the key is secure storage with regular monitoring of stocks, and careful oversight and rigorous responsibility for weapons issued to individuals. For excess or obsolescent weapons, the best solution is almost always destruction.

The most publicized small arms destruction programmes focus on the weapons of individual private owners. In 2003 several initiatives were under way to collect and destroy unwanted civilian firearms. Most were relatively small and even the largest received little international attention. In Kenya 8,000 illicit small arms and light weapons confiscated by the police and army were destroyed in the previous year (*Nation*, 2003). A highly publicized amnesty and buy-back programme in the Australian state of Victoria in 2003 brought in 18,934 newly illegal handguns, surrendered by civilian owners to police for eventual destruction (Mickelborough, 2004).

In other regions, disarming civilians and ex-combatants is controversial and politically sensitive. In Angola, a debate on how to collect weapons in civilian hands in the aftermath of the war has continued inconclusively (APA, 2003). An effort to disarm 40,000 former combatants in Liberia collapsed in December 2003 and had to be suspended, not because of opposition, but apparently due to poor planning and under-funding (Carroll, 2003).

Many police forces still find it difficult to say no to trade-in subsidies.

After repeated failures, a new disarmament programme aimed at former militiamen was launched in Afghanistan in October 2003. A pilot scheme was inaugurated by President Hamid Karzai with some 1,000 former fighters in the relatively peaceful province of Kunduz. The Japanese government has pledged USD 200 million to extend the project over the entire country, covering 100,000 former militiamen during 2004–05 (Constable, 2003; Reuters, 2003a).

The most successful individual-oriented collection programme in 2003 almost certainly was in the Solomon Islands, where hundreds of small arms previously taken from government arsenals were recovered. Although there currently are no plans for these weapons to be destroyed, the stockpile will be securely stored (PACIFIC).

Although institutional destruction receives much less public attention, it is responsible for the biggest changes in global stockpiles. When Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi opened the 2003 UN Biennial Small Arms Conference, noting that four million small arms had been destroyed in the last decade, she was mostly referring to elimination of institutional surpluses. Similarly, when US Assistant Secretary of State Lincoln Bloomfield told the same meeting that since 2001 US-supported programmes had destroyed more than 400,000 weapons and 44 million pieces of ammunition, he too referred mostly to destruction of institutional surpluses (Bloomfield, 2003).

The total scale of global small arms destruction, mostly eliminating obsolescent or unnecessary weapons, is difficult to assess. Examples of some of these undertakings are listed in Table 2.5. The table lists 12 countries with major institutional destruction projects responsible for the elimination of roughly 4.2 million small arms and light weapons. This is in addition to the destruction of over four million institutional and public firearms previously reported destroyed by the Small Arms Survey (2002, p. 74). In all, more than eight million small arms are known to have been destroyed during the last decade.

**Table 2.5 Institutional small arms destruction, selected examples**

Country	Items	Quantity	Years	Supervision
Australia	Revolvers	3,674	2002	Queensland police
Bulgaria	SALW	77,050	2001-2002	Multilateral
Canada	Pistols	20,000	2003*	RCMP
China	Firearms	1,300,000	1999-2001	Police
France	Firearms	140,000	1998-2000	France
Germany	SALW	1,576,419	1990-2002	German army
Netherlands	Firearms	143,632	1994-96	Dutch army
Romania	SALW	195,510	2002-2003	Multilateral
Russia	SALW	470,000	2002	Russian army
Serbia	SALW	117,269	2001-2003	Multilateral
South Africa	Firearms	115,711	1999-2001	Police
<b>Total (rounded)</b>		<b>4,200,000</b>	<b>1994-2003</b>	

Note: \* Date reported.

Sources: Australia: Parnell (2003); Bulgaria: Hirst (2002, pp. 5, 11); Canada: Canada (2003); China: Small Arms Survey (2003); France (2003, p. 10); Germany (2003, p. 59); the Netherlands: Wezeman and Wezeman (1996, p. 8); Romania: Barbulescu (2003); Russia: Itar-Tass, 8 July 2003; Serbia (2003, p. 5); South Africa (2003)

Many of these destruction programmes came at the end of a period of political change and cannot be repeated. Reductions in Europe were facilitated by the end of the Cold War. This brought an end to requirements for large standing armies and their reserve components. Destruction of small arms was a logical extension of the principles articulated in the 1993 Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, which led to the destruction of a large number of major weapon systems.

**Box 2.2 Sri Lanka's post-war firearms**

As the case of Iraq demonstrates, it is often after wars end that stockpile security becomes most acute. After combat ceases, weapons earlier distributed to secure victory suddenly exacerbate social instability and crime. In times of war, small arms are often doled out despite poor record-keeping. The recipients might include village militias, unofficial military units and paramilitaries, and political sympathizers. These groups are often unwilling to return the weapons later.

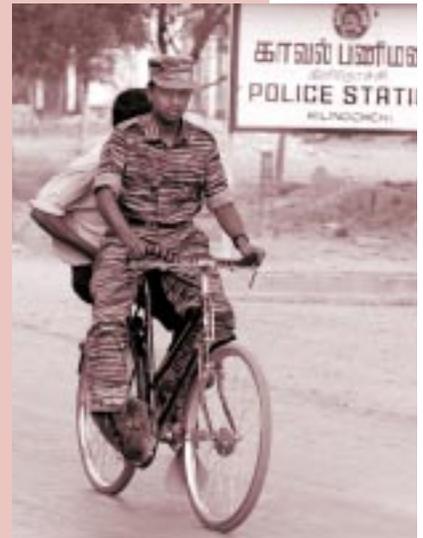
Sri Lanka is the latest in a long list of countries where war weapons assumed a new post-conflict importance. After more than two decades of fighting, the government and ethnic Tamil rebels agreed to a preliminary ceasefire on 22 February 2002. This led to a deal on 6 December 2002 granting a degree of autonomy to the country's Tamil minority (*Washington Post*, 2003). Despite numerous incidents and limited support from the country's majority Sinhalese population, the arrangement has held so far (Izzadeen, 2003).

The peace appears to have contributed little to reducing the problem of weapons now flowing throughout Sri Lankan society. The sources of these weapons are numerous. Black markets started initially to serve the rebels soon expanded to satisfy ordinary civilians and organized criminals (Ashtakala, 2003). Over the years, tens of thousands of soldiers have deserted, often taking their weapons with them. Government agencies issued additional weapons to politically sensitive groups. Army commanders are also alleged to have held on to captured rebel arsenals for their own reasons (*TamilNet*, 2002).

As in other countries emerging from war, the end of fighting triggered a post-war crime wave. The incidence of crime reached unprecedented heights, with over 1,900 murders annually (Interpol, various years). Cognizant of the problem, the Sri Lankan Ministry of Interior authorized an amnesty for unlicensed weapons in December 2001. This flopped, yielding only a few shotguns, according to one source (Nonis and Wijewardena, 2002). Threats of harsh police action were ignored (Jayasinghe, 2002). Even some of the 225 members of parliament who received police handguns for their personal security refused to cooperate (*Deepika*, 2003; *EelamNation*, 2003).

Exacerbating the small arms problem is the unwillingness of public officials to acknowledge its true dimensions. According to then Interior Minister John Amaratunga, the number of unauthorized firearms in circulation before the end of the war was around 20,000 (Subramanian, 2001). More recently, official sources have spoken of 45,000. To judge from wars elsewhere—such as those in Central America and Africa—the real total is likely to be much higher. Independent experts place the figure in the hundreds of thousands (Muggah, 2003). Using survey estimating techniques and accounting for civilian possession, it is likely that the actual number lies somewhere between almost 1 million and 2.4 million guns in Sri Lanka (see Table 2.6). This is far from the last word, but it may offer a more accurate sense of the dimensions of small arms availability in the country.

Although the country has achieved an uneasy peace, the long history of ethnic tension and distrust will take decades to heal. The legacy of uncontrolled small arms may be no easier to deal with. The first step will be to assess accurately the scale of the challenge facing policy-makers. Re-establishing order will take time, but if well-conceived and designed measures match the size of the problem, it undoubtedly will be achieved more quickly and more permanently.



Returning to normal? An unarmed Tamil Tiger soldier and companion cycle past a police station in Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka, in July 2002.

© Reuters/Anurudha Lokuparuarachchi

**Table 2.6 Approximate distribution of Sri Lankan small arms, 2004**

Group	Group population	Small arms multiplier	Estimated small arms inventory*
Armed Forces	157,900	2.25	355,000
Home Guard	20,000	2.25	45,000
National Armed Reserve	15,000	2.25	34,000
Police (with Special Task Force)	28,000	1.2	34,000
Civilians	19,000,000	3-10/100	600,000-1,900,000**
LTTE combatants	7,000	1.6	11,000
<b>Total (rounded)</b>			<b>1,000,000-2,400,000</b>

Notes: \*Estimated inventories of each group are rounded to the nearest 1,000.

\*\*Estimated by the Small Arms Survey.

Sources: The size of the armed forces and LTTE from IISS (2002, p. 135); the Home Guard, National Armed Reserve, and police from Blood (1990, ch. 5) and *TamilNet* (2003); the civilian multiplier is based on Small Arms Survey (2002, pp. 101-2)

In the Balkans it was only through combined pressure from several sources that governments agreed to destroy their weapons surpluses. Only with the end of the Yugoslav wars was destruction domestically acceptable. Successor states also became vulnerable to outside pressure as a result of their desire to join Western security and political institutions. Other European governments and institutions grew alarmed at black market transfers originating in the region. Similarly, South Africa was able to reduce its small arms inventories following the end of apartheid. The most uncertainty surrounds China, where large quantities of confiscated firearms were destroyed by police during a major Strike Hard campaign. The reliability of the Chinese figure is questionable (Small Arms Survey, 2003). While the other numbers in Figure 2.4 appear solid, inclusion of Chinese firearm destruction necessitates rounding the final total.

Contrary to general expectations, the pace of institutional small arms destruction has not slackened following the destruction of many of the largest surpluses. Germany continued destruction through 2003, when the Bundeswehr scrapped an additional 96,510 small arms, mostly G-3 automatic rifles (Musik, 2003). The most spectacular projects tend to occur in countries where enormous military stockpiles remain. With few exceptions, these are associated with the infantry-dominated military doctrine of the Soviet Union or Maoist People's War. Russia reportedly has plans to eliminate a further 1.2 million 'light weapons' (Poroskov, 2003). Ukraine also is in negotiations for a major destruction programme involving the elimination of 1.5 million small arms and light weapons (NATO, 2003). Bulgaria reportedly has another 500,000 unwanted AK-47s awaiting a decision on their fate (Talev, 2001).

There also appears to be a need for major destruction projects in Latin America. In much of Latin America the armed forces are believed to hoard obsolescent equipment. This habit leaves massive stockpiles of redundant small arms (Pablo Dreyfus, private communication). The systematic destruction of these stockpiles, to prevent them being illegally diverted or dumped on civilian markets, has yet to be addressed by regional governments.

## CASUAL LOSS: INDIVIDUAL THEFT AND DISAPPEARANCE

Daring attacks on government armouries and smaller cases betraying the public trust get the most media attention. But it is small-scale burglary, mostly from private homes, that appears to account for the majority of stolen firearms. This is another aspect of the gradual transformation of global stockpiles through individual decisions. Illustrating the tyranny of small actions, these inconspicuous events probably do much more to shape the global distribution of small arms than the better-reported major transfers.

Stolen guns can present the greatest risk to society. Most of the world's small arms—especially the roughly 400 million guns in civilian hands—are rarely fired. Typical of this situation is Germany, where there are an estimated ten million gun owners (UN, 1998). Of these, only some 2.4 million belong to shooting clubs, which permits them to buy ammunition. Presumably most of the rest do very little shooting. For most of these guns, the moment of greatest danger to human life often comes when they are stolen.

Stolen firearms are widely acknowledged to be among the most likely to be used in violent crime. This conclusion is illustrated most clearly in *time-to-crime studies* on typical intervals between gun theft and use in crime in the United States (US, ATF, 2002). In countries with relatively effective registration systems, unregistered and stolen weapons can often amount to 90 per cent or more of all guns seized at crime scenes (Mouzos, 2000). They play a major role in black markets. Stolen firearms become a serious problem for other countries when they feed into the domestic illicit trade.

The flow of small arms smuggled piecemeal out of the United States, for example, is a serious issue in bilateral relations with the country's neighbours.

The most comprehensive analysis of international statistics on theft, in the 1998 UN Firearm Regulation Study, covered 28 countries. These were the only respondents who were both able and willing to report data on the problem. If these one-year reports are regarded as annual averages, they indicate that in these 28 countries an average of 103,000 privately owned guns are reported stolen or lost every year (UN, 1998). The data are too incomplete to serve as a basis for a global estimate. Major gun-owning countries left out include China, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Pakistan, and most of the United States. Nor are there any reports from the Middle East or most of Southeast Asia. Worse, there are serious problems with many of the UN study's individual reports. There are no standards for international reporting of theft data, which varies greatly in comprehensiveness.

Stolen firearms are widely acknowledged to be among the most likely to be used in violent crime.

The Canadian figure, for example, uses a year in which a statistical 'house cleaning' took place, apparently in reaction to forthcoming changes in the law. This inflated the theft and losses by including a large number of events from previous years (Wendy Cukier, private communication, 28 July 2003). The US figure is drawn from a special study. This referred exclusively to a small category of thefts, namely those against federally licensed firearms dealers over nine months. The Argentine figure referred exclusively to the federal capital district of Buenos Aires (UN, 1998).

### US gun theft

As is often the case in these issues, the most incisive lessons come from the United States. It almost certainly has the largest theft problem, if only because it has the most publicly owned guns. But understanding the scale of gun theft in the United States is not easy, because it has only limited firearms registration and no central agency responsible for collecting reports of gun theft. The small figure supplied to the UN in 1998, for example, referred exclusively to thefts from federally licensed US gun dealers during a nine-month period (UN, 1998, p. 85).

The importance of the problem and the limits of knowledge about it are illustrated in a systematic study of firearms theft in the United States undertaken by American criminologist Gary Kleck. To evaluate the scale of US gun theft, he relied on the annual US National Crime Victimization Survey. This large, government-sponsored survey of crime trends showed 341,000 incidents of gun theft per year between 1987 and 1992. This says nothing about the number of guns actually stolen in each incident. Since American gun owners, like gun owners in much of the world, typically have several guns, it is likely that more than one was taken in an average theft. Assuming that an average of roughly 1.5–5 guns are taken in each incident, Kleck concluded that the total number of guns stolen in the United States each year ranges from 570,000 to 1,820,000 (Kleck, 1997, p. 92). Not all analysts are satisfied with this estimate. Many are more comfortable with the conservative round figure of 500,000 (Jacobs, 2002, p. 109).

The most comprehensive international statistics on theft appeared in the 1998 UN International Study on Firearms Regulation.

Although the uncertainties remain troublesome, the rate of US small arms theft appears exceptional as well, a direct consequence of the special size of its public stockpile. Kleck's original calculation shows that the chance of an average US gun being stolen could be as high as one in 150 annually. At the lowest calculated rate of theft, US citizens are victims of one gun theft annually for every 417 privately owned small arms. Even the lower rate of theft is higher than that of any other developed country for which data is available. Australia and Canada, discussed below, appear to come closest to having comparable problems with gun theft.

### Theft elsewhere

Estimates of the total number of guns stolen in the United States each year may range from 500,000 to 1,820,000.

Comparison with other countries is complicated by the lack of systematic data on stockpiles, theft, or loss. Even where reported theft rates are available, it is difficult to establish the actual rate, above all because of uncertainties surrounding unregistered guns. Victims of gun theft are presumably less inclined to report the theft of an unregistered—illegal—gun when this might invite their own prosecution. While most crime is under-reported, small arms theft appears to be severely affected. In some countries, moreover, stolen or illegally sold guns can simply be reported as lost or missing. Despite its seeming innocence, this category introduces even more questions about what is actually going on.

A handful of countries have released data on both total registrations and total small arms theft and loss. Although these are not enough for conclusive estimates of global gun theft, they offer a basis for evaluating its possible scale. Table 2.6 compares registered stockpiles and theft rates in a smaller group of countries for which both kinds of data are available. It shows that for these countries the average annual rate of reported small arms theft is about one for every 1,500 legally owned guns. The average rate for developed countries is somewhat lower (about 1/2,000) while the only two developing countries in the sample have a much higher average (about 1/360). None of these figures includes theft of unregistered guns, the largest pool in many of these countries.

The US theft figures are more comprehensive since they are based on public surveys rather than police reports. This may explain why they are higher than those of other developed countries. Canada appears to be more typical, with reports of theft or loss averaging 5,000 guns annually for 1997–2001, or one out of every 1,600 guns annually, according to official statistics (Hung, 2003). Other sources maintain that actual theft rates are much higher. According to Barry Breitreuz, an average of 17,000 guns were stolen annually during the same period (*Sault Star*, 2003). Although the source of the higher figure is not clear, it would be equal to the theft of one out of every 460 Canadian guns, apparently including unregistered firearms.

Many of the difficulties inherent in theft and loss data are especially stark in Canada. Canadian theft and loss statistics appear to be an inverse ratio of the proportion of firearms registered: the more guns registered, the fewer reported stolen. This partially results from better home gun storage, a requirement of Canadian legal reforms. In Canada, moreover, there is a legal responsibility to report all stolen and missing firearms. These laws have the unintended consequence of making owners of unregistered guns more vulnerable to prosecution themselves. As a result the Canadian figures probably do not include a significant share of the unregistered guns stolen or missing (Hung, private communication, July 2003).

Is Canadian gun theft declining or is reporting down? This is a critical subject for future research. Officially reported gun losses declined 75 per cent from 1995 to 2001 (see Figure 2.1). Did gun losses really drop that much, or are Canadians more afraid to report them? Other forms of gun crime fell in Canada during this period as well, albeit less dramatically. For instance, homicides with guns fell from 212 to 151. Robbery fell slightly, from 30,273 incidents reported in 1995 to 27,414 in 2001. Neither of these clearly substantiates a drop in gun theft. The crime statistic that best supports a real decline in gun theft is armed robbery, a crime often committed with stolen guns. This fell from 6,692 reported incidents in 1995 to just 3,833 in 2001, a decline of 43 per cent.

Much of the problem with understanding gun theft and loss trends in Canada stems from the impact of firearms registration, which has been largely, but not completely, successful so far, as described below. In Australia, where registration has been about as effective, probably covering at least two-thirds of all firearms, the reported theft and loss rate is one for every 516 annually (Mouzos, 2002). According to Justice Minister Chris Ellison, stolen guns have replaced smuggling as the largest source of firearms used in Australian gun crime (ABC, 2003). The US theft rate, it appears, may not be so exceptional after all.

High theft rates are also found in the two developing countries examined here—the Philippines and South Africa. In South Africa the rate of reported gun theft is especially dramatic, rising in parallel with the general crime rate through the 1990s before stabilizing at the end of the decade (see Figure 2.2). Currently the country has approximately 3.5 million registered private firearms (Chetty, 2000). At the most recently published theft and loss rates, the chance that any one of these guns would be reported lost was one in 160 every year.

Comparison of gun theft and loss in most countries is complicated by the lack of systematic data.

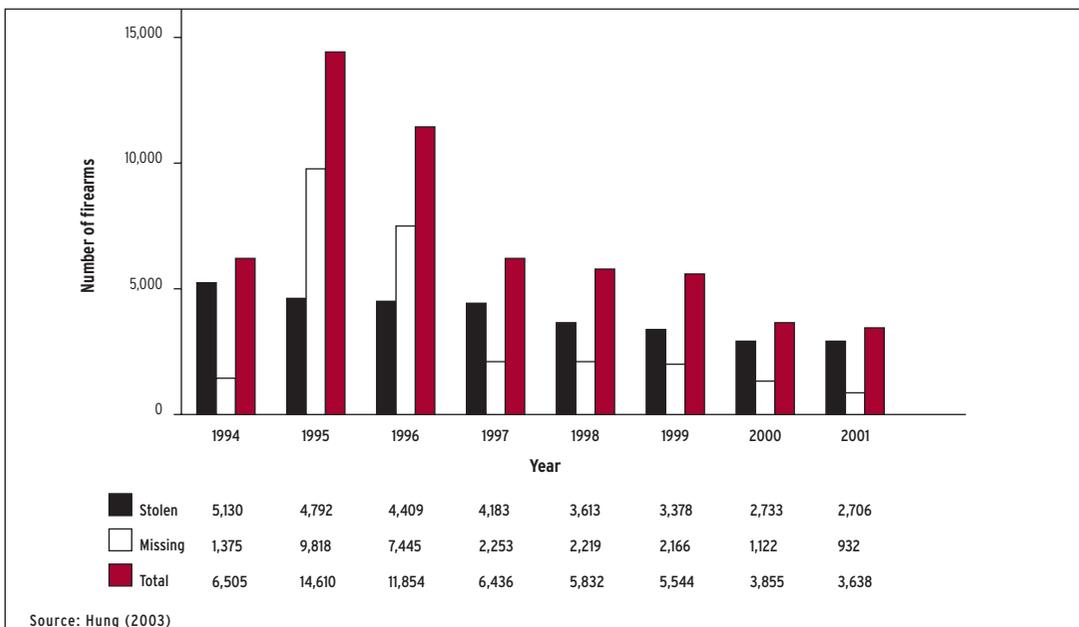
**Table 2.7 Selected annual gun theft rates**

Country	Year	Reported stolen	Legal ownership	Theft ratio
Australia	2001	4,195	2,165,170	1/520
Canada	2001	3,638	1,938,338	1/530
England and Wales	1996	3,002	1,793,712	1/600
Finland	1996	932	1,700,000	1/1,820
Norway	1996	339	990,000	1/2,920
Philippines	1996	1,234	706,148	1/570
South Africa	2001	23,000	3,500,000	1/150
Spain	1996	1,389	3,051,588	1/2,200
Sweden	1996	1,400	2,096,798	1/1,500
United States	1997	500,000	260,000,000	1/520
Average for all ten countries				1/1,080
Continental Europe				1/2110
Other Western countries				1/540
Developing countries				1/360

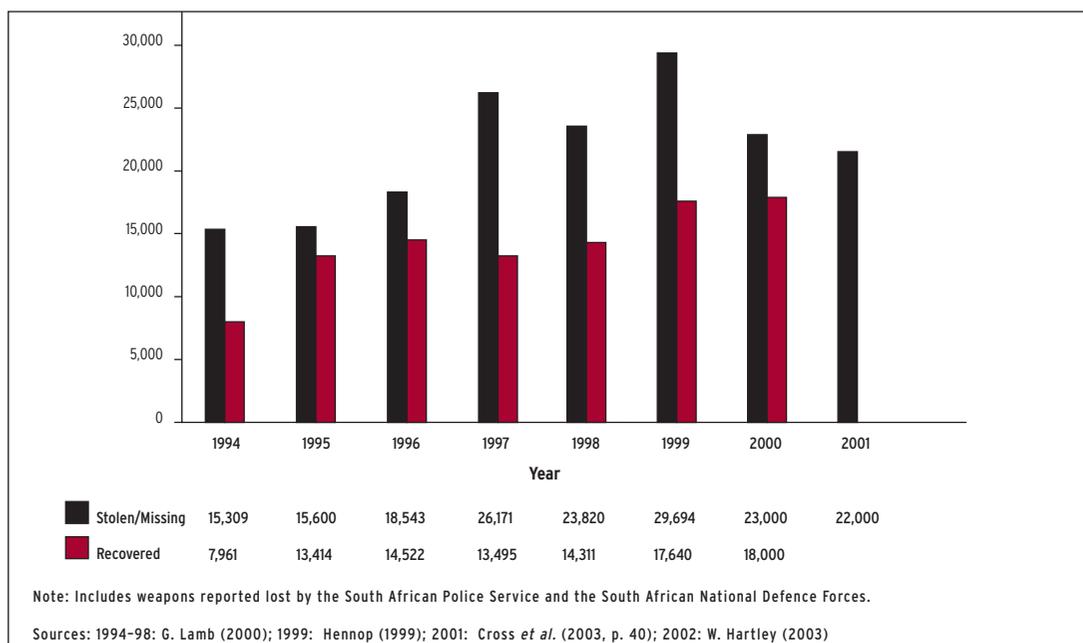
Note: The original data often does not indicate a base year. The figure for the United States refers to total estimated theft. Theft ratios are rounded.

Sources: Australia: Mouzos (2002); England and Wales: Criminal Statistics (2000); South Africa: Cross *et al.* (2003); United States: Kleck (1997). All other theft statistics from UN (1998). United States firearms statistics refer to all firearms theft, since virtually all US private firearms are legally owned. Legal ownership statistics from Small Arms Survey (2002, pp. 86, 980; 2003, pp. 64–5, 83)

**Figure 2.1 Canadian firearms reported stolen or missing, 1994–2001**



**Figure 2.2 South African firearms reported stolen/missing and recovered, 1994-2002**



### Estimating global firearms theft

Although the data examined here provides only a limited basis for assessment, a sense of global trends is emerging. The countries examined here fall into three broad categories: those with low rates of civilian gun theft such as the continental Europeans, with reported loss rates of one out of every 1,500–2,900 publicly owned guns; other Western countries with an average rate of reported theft of one of every 520 guns; and—most cautiously—developing countries with an average rate of one of every 360 legally owned firearms (see Table 2.6). All of these rates apply exclusively to legally owned firearms, a small proportion of civilian stockpiles in many countries.

Total global gun theft and loss appear to be at least one million guns every year.

Determining even approximately how many small arms are stolen or go missing from the hundreds of millions of private owners around the world is not an easy task. If the average global rate approximates the continental European rate for legally owned guns of roughly one per 2,000, the total could be as low as 250,000 stolen or lost annually. This is just too optimistic, though, since even more probably are lost in the United States alone. In reality, global theft and loss rates are likely to be closer to that of other Western countries where it averages roughly one per 500 (see Table 2.6). At that rate, total global gun theft and loss from private owners appears to be at least one million guns every year. Better research is likely to show that it is actually much higher.

### Solutions to casual losses

Gun ownership enthusiasts tend to argue that the solution to firearms theft and loss is stronger law enforcement. If there are fewer people willing to risk criminal behaviour, there should be less illegal demand for guns (Jacobs, 2002; Lott, 2003a). While laws focusing exclusively on gun crime undoubtedly help, there is no evidence to suggest that they are sufficient. Deliberate breaches of public trust and individual negligence suggest that training alone will not significantly reduce the scale of the problem either. Nor can educating owners have much effect on incidence of household burglary.

The key to stockpile management is combining measures to reduce illegal demand with programmes to reduce supply. This means making burglary less likely to succeed, negligence more likely to be discovered, and corruption more likely to be prosecuted. Increasingly aware of the scale and dangers of gun theft, governments are more willing to stress the issue (*Ghanaweb*, 2003). Lack of financing makes it impossible for many to establish the proper facilities that security requires, and secure storage is on the list of international small arms priorities for donor governments.



Assuring stockpile security: A gun-locking system made of solid steel and stress-tested to 4,000 pounds.

© Bill Pugliano/Getty Images

Even where financing is not available, there is much that government institutions can do. Money and secure storage facilities are important, but personal responsibility is even more consequential. The key to reducing theft and loss is promotion and reinforcement of a *culture of individual responsibility*. This appears to be the only way to minimize the risk of theft or loss from government stockpiles over time. It also is the best way to minimize the dangers of theft or loss of privately owned guns.

So long as there are few or no penalties for losing a gun, people will continue to lose them. When the men and women responsible for small arms security believe that their personal future depends on the safety of the weapons under their authority, they may be less likely to let those weapons disappear so easily. They are liable to be more vigilant, harder to bribe or intimidate. This leads to a short list of recommendations, preconditions for cultures of responsibility to emerge:

1. Specific individuals must be responsible for specific small arms.
2. Losses must be reported and investigated quickly.
3. Responsible individuals must be subject to serious disciplinary action for any loss.

By focusing exclusively on theft by street criminals, current practices in many countries fail to deal with equally important aspects of gun theft: supply and opportunity. By ensuring a ready supply of criminal firearms, negligence and corruption probably do as much to encourage theft and resale of official small arms as criminal demand. In light of the relatively permissive control cultures found in much of the world, more needs to be done to penalize not just the theft of small arms but also their loss.

These are problems that public policy and international assistance can help overcome. Creating cultures of responsibility involves the same kind of reforms as other practices of public safety, from mandatory seat-belt use to childproof medicine packaging. International support for safe storage facilities would help, as would campaigns to raise awareness. In many countries, regulatory and even legal reform may be necessary as well. Above all, theft and loss prevention requires new attitudes, treating firearm ownership not only as a right but also as a life-and-death responsibility.

The key to reducing theft and loss is the promotion and reinforcement of a culture of individual responsibility.

## REGISTRATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

Better law enforcement to discourage crime is a crucial part of the solution to gun theft. To judge from the high theft rates in much of the world, though, individual owners need help too. Secure home storage facilities such as those already required in Australia, Canada, and Sweden are the most obvious way to make theft harder. Laws making individuals responsible for the fate of their guns also need careful evaluation.

A prominent result of international concern with the effects of small arms proliferation is greater interest in better firearm laws. This has taken two general forms: *reform* of existing laws to better address changing public priorities, and establishment of *new legal systems* regulating public firearm ownership.

### Reform in the United States

The complicated and seemingly innumerable forms that small-scale legal reform can take are abundantly illustrated by the US gun control debate. Reform measures dominate the debate in the United States, where federal devolution and firearm rights make wholesale revision of ownership difficult. Even so, debate in the United States over firearm policy in 2003 reached a salience not witnessed for many years, an intensity almost certain to grow through 2004.

The impetus appears to come only partially from the 2004 presidential campaign, which has seen little discussion of an issue widely viewed as highly polarized. Instead, debate is dominated by a congeries of specific gun policy issues, often played exclusively on regional or local stages. With legal authority spread across 50 states, regulatory debate has been extremely diverse. Legislation often seems contradictory. For example, some states have restricted ownership rights by banning particular kinds of firearms (such as pistols that fire heavy—.50 calibre—machine gun bullets) or mandating that guns carry personalized identification technology (Winton, 2003). At the same time, other states are moving toward more permissive regulation. The most prominent innovations of 2003 were additional laws permitting ordinary adults to carry guns in public in states such as Michigan, Missouri, and Wisconsin.

In Washington, DC, some of the strongest interest in tighter gun control comes as an unintended side effect of the 'War on Terror'. Gun control is not explicitly mentioned in the US National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (White House, 2003). Tighter restrictions on gun ownership rights have emerged, instead, as an extension of US efforts to minimize terrorist threats. It was concern with prevention of terrorism that led President Bush to support extension of an emotionally charged law prohibiting sales of new semi-automatic assault weapons, although he has not lobbied aggressively for it. Passed as part of the 1994 Federal Crime Bill, the provision made it a federal crime for a private individual to possess or transfer a semi-automatic assault weapon manufactured after that date. Despite the presidential endorsement, the US Congress is sharply divided on extending the ban, scheduled to expire on 13 September 2004 (Lichtblau, 2003b). Instead, the Congress went along with a law to ban imitation guns (Baldor, 2003).

It would not be correct, though, to think that the War on Terror favours only gun control. It led to permission for US airline pilots to carry guns in the cockpit and mandated greater use of armed sky marshals. Both measures are strongly opposed in many other countries (Reuters, 2003b). Attorney General John Ashcroft strongly endorsed a proposal to immediately destroy records on background checks of gun buyers. Previously these were kept for 90 days. Many gun enthusiasts were afraid that the system could be used to undermine civil liberties and potentially evolve into a substitute for gun licensing and registration (*Washington Post*, 2004). Under the terms of the Consolidated (or Omnibus) Appropriations Bill passed by the Senate on 22 January 2003 and signed into law a few

days later, federal records on *lawful* gun purchasers who are approved by the National Instant Check System must be destroyed within 24 hours (Kopel, 2004; PRODUCERS).

The greatest potential to add restrictions to US gun policy currently comes from state and federal courts, in which dozens of cities and interest groups are suing manufacturers and distributors for legal damages. These suits are intended to restrict and reduce sales by making manufacturers and merchants responsible for the use of their products. None of these suits has succeeded, but legal opinion seems to agree that this could change (Sebok, 2003). In response, Congress is debating legislation to prohibit such suits. Thirty-three US states already restrict such suits. After passing the House of Representatives in 2003, a bill to shelter the gun industry from negligence suits nationwide failed to reach debate in the Senate (Oliphant, 2003). But such measures have strong political support and seem likely to be enacted sooner or later (Holland, 2003).

In Washington, some of the strongest interest in tightening gun control is an unintended side effect of the US 'War on Terror'.

### Reform measures elsewhere

Reforms tightening existing gun laws and regulations are increasingly common elsewhere in the world. Where there is strong support, even modest reform processes can make significant contributions towards better stockpile control. In the *United Kingdom*, active-universal registration is long established. But devolution previously kept firearm registers at the local level. A new initiative sponsored by the Association of Chief Police Officers will lead to the establishment of a simple national database. Relying on nothing more than networking of existing local databases, this system is expected to become operational in August 2004 (Nash, 2003). Concerned with the rise of violent crime, the United Kingdom has increased the criminal penalties for gun crime and extended its gun prohibitions. Under the 2004 Anti-Social Behaviour Act, Britain banned a special form of air gun easily converted to fire live ammunition, as well as look-alike imitation guns (UK, Home Office, 2004).

Under the 2000 Firearms Control Act, *South Africa* is trying to limit handgun ownership and correct oversights like the one that left 200,000 firearms registered to deceased owners. Tighter restrictions on granting firearm licences are expected to make it harder for criminals to buy guns (Naidu, 2003; Schronen, 2003). In 2002 *Germany* tightened some of the requirements for a weapons licence (Small Arms Survey, 2003).

Not all reforms succeed at first try. In the *Philippines*, for example, an order by the Philippine National Police in January 2003 prohibiting the carrying of guns in public was overturned by the courts on procedural grounds (San Juan, 2003). A revised law went into effect in December 2003 and will stay in effect for six months, largely in an attempt to reduce criminal and political violence (Vargas, 2003).

### New domestic legal regimes

Establishing new legal systems—with fundamentally different rules—for gun regulation is much more difficult and less common. Among the most sweeping measures of the 1990s were the ban on all handguns in the United Kingdom and Australia's ban on semi-automatic weapons and harmonization of state requirements for safe storage. Neither of these measures involved the active participation of more than a small proportion of gun owners. After a pause of several years, the momentum for radical change appears to be accelerating again. Among the most prominent themes to emerge are new national systems to license firearms owners and register their guns.

There are two types of new national firearms registration schemes. Each has distinctive problems of implementation and impact on gun issues:

- The more ambitious aims to register all guns in the country, including those purchased in the past. Such *active-universal registration* requires the participation of all gun owners, who must supply inventories of their collections. The approach promises relatively quick and far-reaching results, but requires the cooperation of gun owners.
- Less extensive cooperation is required by less ambitious systems of *passive-partial registration*. These stress registration only of newly bought guns. Typically this is done at the time of purchase. Passive systems are cheaper, easier, and less controversial, but take much longer to cover a substantial proportion of firearms—decades instead of years.

New firearms registration schemes can be divided into two types: *active-universal* and *passive-partial*.

### Firearms registration in Canada

The most ambitious active-universal registration initiative in recent years came into full legal force on 1 January 2003. The Canadian reform, through its successes and shortcomings, is likely to influence other countries as they consider similar measures. In the long run it could do more to reshape the international climate for registration of personal weapons than any comparable measure has before.

In 1995 the Canadian Senate approved Bill C-68, the Firearms Act. This required all gun owners to be licensed and their guns registered. Previously the nation of 31 million had restricted ownership of handguns but allowed qualified buyers to acquire rifles and shotguns freely. A formal goal was 'to prevent people who are a danger to themselves or others from accessing firearms' (CFC, 2003a). Supporters also sought to prevent Canadian gun culture from evolving into something similar to that of the United States. The Firearms Act had strong public support (76 per cent) as recently as 2001 (Hartley and Mazzuca, 2001). Nevertheless, implementation has not been trouble-free and controversy has become acute.

A three-stage process of implementation began *first* with the creation of the Canadian Firearms Centre and the infrastructure for record-keeping and management. In 1998 the *second* stage began with mandatory licensing of all gun owners. When this task was completed in 2001, a total of 1.9 million owners had been licensed. This meant the system had won the participation of roughly 83 per cent of the country's estimated 2.3 million gun owners. The *third* stage of implementation involved registering guns. By July 2003, when the process was completed after several extensions, a total of 6.5 million firearms had been registered (CFC, 2003b). To judge from a public survey, this represented about 82 per cent of the estimated 7.9 million guns owned by the Canadian people (GPC, 2002).

After eight years of preparation, the new Canadian licensing and registration system is a reality. Gun crime appears to be down, including gun homicides and especially armed robbery. The latter fell to one-third the rate of a decade before, from 30.79 per 100,000 people in 1992 to 11.05 in 2002 (Hung, 2003). There also have been negative effects. Inadvertently, the law also may have erected barriers to reporting gun theft. Although the evidence is largely anecdotal, reports of seizures at the border suggest that smugglers are trying more aggressively to feed illegal demand with guns from the United States. This was mitigated by a 50 per cent increase in border seizures (Botchford, 2003). A curious side effect was the emergence of a rental market for illegal firearms in parts of Canada. Rarely seen outside developing countries, this is unambiguous evidence of a shortage of illegal weapons (Agrell, 2003).

Original estimates in 1994 claimed that the licensing and registration system would cost CAD 119 million (USD 90 million). All but CAD 2 million (USD 1.5 million) was to be recovered through fees. In December 2002, however, the Canadian Auditor General presented a report revealing that total expenses in the first seven years were CAD 688 million (USD 430.5 million) (see Table 2.8). The bill for the first ten years of operation is expected to top CAD 1 billion (USD 639 million) (Clark, 2002). These figures gave opponents their strongest argument against the system. The undertaking was tarred as a monument to waste, abuse, and inefficiency. Demands to stop the registry, previously dismissed as extremism, won greater support.

According to the Canadian government, costs rose for several reasons. The initial estimate referred exclusively to database development—the national web of computers and software at the heart of the system—and even this turned out to cost more than twice as much as expected. Implementation costs were also significant. Fees, intended to offset expenses, were waived in many cases to attract participation. Expenses are declining as the implementation phase ends, but running costs still are expected to average CAD 50 million–80 million annually (Naumetz, 2003).

Canadian planners appear to have underestimated the expense of establishing a new bureaucracy. The United States, by comparison, will spend over USD 1 billion to start a much smaller registry exclusively to check new buyers for criminal histories (Lichtblau, 2003a). The C-68 approach also faced disadvantages typical of universal registration schemes. It encountered resistance from gun advocates. This was exacerbated by regional politics as the system became a convenient tool for polarizing opinion. Paul Martin, the former Finance Minister and Liberal Party stalwart who replaced Jean Chrétien as Prime Minister on 12 December 2003, agreed to review the firearm system. Although he has refused to act precipitously, this could lead to changes.

In Canada, the most ambitious registration initiative in recent years registered a total of 6.5 million firearms as of July 2003.

**Table 2.8 Canadian firearms licensing and registration costs, 1995-96 to 2001-02**

Category	Cost in millions of CAD	Percentage
Programme administration	65.7	10
Communications		9
Advertising	29.3	
Outreach activities	15.0	
Training	8.7	
Database development	227.1	33
Programme delivery		48
Miramichi central processing site	59.5	
Royal Canadian Mounted Police registrar	64.0	
Form design and printing	40.6	
Opt-out jurisdictions*	28.5	
Provincial contributions	128.6	
Enforcement support	2.2	0.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>669.2</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: \* When provincial governments refused to participate, their expenses were charged to the federal exchequer. The original source, cited below, gives total expenditures of CAD 688.3 million–699.2 million. The vagueness may arise from inclusion of unspecified budgetary items. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Source: CFC (2002)

**Who's next?**

**Brazil**

In December 2003 Brazil became the first country since Canada to establish a major new gun control system. With roughly 26,000 firearm homicides annually, Brazil has one of the deadliest gun cultures in the world. Over the past decade the problem has inspired a national debate and a series of efforts to craft new legislation on firearms policy. Public dismay over firearm crime and the poor results of previous reform finally culminated in the radically visionary Disarmament Statute. Signed into law by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on 22 December 2003, this is the most sweeping reform package enacted anywhere in memory. Unlike other measures enacted elsewhere—including ambitious reforms in Australia, Britain, and Canada—this statute seeks to fundamentally change an entire national gun culture.

Brazil established a new licensing and registration system in 1997. Ostensibly *active-universal* in conception, its effectiveness was undermined by poor enforcement and weak penalties. To address the numerous loopholes in this and other laws, the new reform package passed in 2003 emerged as a set of specific measures, each directed at a particular aspect of the nation's gun problems. It includes provisions to:



Small arms escalation: Brazilian federal police patrol a shantytown of Rio de Janeiro in May 2003.

© Andre Vieira/Getty Images

- ban carrying firearms in public, with some exceptions. Illegally carrying a gun is punishable by jail. This empowers the police to get guns off the streets;
- raise the minimum age of legal possession to 25. This measure is addressed at the particular problem of gun crime among juveniles and young adults;
- authorize a national referendum in October 2005 on the proposal to ban sales of all firearms and ammunition;
- introduce criminal penalties for arms trafficking. This empowers the Brazilian government to act against illegal firearms imports, largely from Paraguay;
- eliminate the right of police and the armed forces personnel to purchase large numbers of guns. This right had been misused to promote illegal trafficking;
- criminalize random firing of guns; and
- subject the brokering of firearms sales to laws on arms transfers (Viva Rio, 2003b; VoA, 2003).

As this list shows, this is a reform package, not a completely new system. The cumulative effect, however, is unmistakable: it is intended to create a civic culture in which guns play less and less of a role. The statute as a whole has the support of about 63 per cent of Brazilians (Franklin, 2003). The most revolutionary and controversial part of the programme is the planned plebiscite to ban all gun sales. This could set an active-universal registration system in motion. This currently has strong public support—around 74–80 per cent according to different opinion polls—but its outlook remains uncertain (Bacoccina, 2003; Viva Rio, 2003a).

Another distinctive aspect of the Brazilian process is the role of foreign influence. Concerned about what it sees as a trend towards global gun control, the US-based National Rifle Association (NRA) made its first direct foray into the policy debates of another country. Charles Cunningham, Director of Federal Affairs at the Institute of Legislative Affairs, the NRA lobbying arm, visited Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. He addressed meetings of industry and parliamentary opponents sponsored by *Pró Legítima Defesa*. The visit was arranged by the Brazilian and US chapters of the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property, a conservative Catholic political organization (McKenna,

In December 2003  
Brazil became the  
first country since  
Canada to establish  
a major new gun  
control system.

2003; Pró Legítima Defesa, 2003). The indirect arrangement hints at the awkwardness of the NRA's first high-level foreign intervention. Although the opposition failed, it is likely to be a bigger force in the referendum.

The outlook for the new legislation is not clear. Implementation has long been a weakness of Brazilian legal reform. The 1997 reform, requiring registration of all firearms purchases, appears to have fallen into disuse. A temporary ban on all gun sales in Rio in 2000 also had little palpable effect. Not only is the new law dependent on enforcement, but parts like the referendum still have to be fully developed. Sustained public interest and official commitment will be essential to its success.

The Disarmament Statute signed by Brazilian President da Silva seeks to fundamentally reform an entire national gun culture.

### Thailand

Public anxiety over gun crime is the catalyst for political action in Thailand as well. The country also has emerged as the centre of the region's black market for firearms. Thai police estimate that there are approximately ten million guns—or which fewer than 40 per cent, or 3.87 million, are registered—in the hands of the nation's 60 million people (Ngamkham, 2003). Gun homicides, the highest reported in all of Asia at 33 per 100,000 annually in 2000, have become a major political issue (UNODC, 2003).

Following a major campaign against the drug trade and organized crime in 2003, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra launched a personal appeal for dramatic change in firearms policy. In May 2003 he announced a one-month amnesty for criminals to turn in illegal guns (AFP, 2003b). In September the weapons collection programme was followed by presentation of a bill that gave owners of illegal guns 30 days to surrender them to police (*Bangkok Post*, 2003a). When the extended grace period finally ended in mid-December, more than 100,000 firearms had been surrendered. In its wake, police began a nationwide crackdown on illegal possession and illegal sales (*Bangkok Post*, 2003b).

A proposal by the Prime Minister to make the country gun-free in five to six years remains extremely controversial. Public opinion still appears to be highly malleable. One recent survey in Bangkok showed 78 per cent opposed (Ghosh, 2003). Another poll, however, showed 62 per cent of Thais supported the policy (Pattugalan, 2003, p. 6). Even so, the government has expressed its intention to persevere with the plan, beginning with a ban on all gun sales (Mahmood, 2003). With so much dependent on the leadership of Prime Minister Thaksin, the outlook for the proposal is obscure. Even if it fails, though, the plan seems likely to serve as a basis for other, less radical proposals in the near future.

Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has proposed to make the country gun-free in five to six years.

## CONCLUSION

There is nothing surprising in the twin trends emphasized in this chapter: the huge numbers of small arms lost from official control versus growing interest in better stockpile management in much of the world. The problem of post-conflict small arms reached a new apogee in Iraq. Small arms continue to be a serious social problem in Latin America. Both examples illustrate the worst side of a global problem. Even in regions and countries where the situation is much less severe, the links between deficient control and the need for public action are hard to miss.

Iraq may be one of the more extreme cases of gun chaos, but it is special exclusively in its scale and suddenness. The catastrophic loss of major arsenals has occurred elsewhere. Unless aggressive steps are taken to ensure better control over small arms stockpiles, many countries remain vulnerable to similar disasters. On a daily basis, the gradual loss of weapons from negligence and theft is even more serious, calling for better management by all owners, whether states or individuals.

The experiences of 2003 confirm the importance of establishing effective regulation of global stockpiles. It was not the guns *per se* which contributed to the deadly environment of post-war Iraq, but the failure to maintain control over official stockpiles. The Iraqi small arms problem is an egregious version of the management problems responsible for the steady flow of weapons from public to criminal hands worldwide. In Iraq, a vital chance to prevent chaos was lost due to a lack of foresight and preparation. Better insight and preparation are no less necessary to reduce the risks of loss of control over official stockpiles elsewhere in the world.

Iraq and Latin America also illustrate fundamental problems and outlooks for civilian stockpile management. In both places, the huge numbers of unlicensed owners and unregistered guns are extreme examples of a global problem. While the Iraqi situation is much more dramatic, the civilian gun problems of Latin America are no less serious. Although reliable data is still lacking, the Latin American situation almost certainly remains more deadly. But because social order and a viable state are not in jeopardy in most of Latin America, the prospects for reform are infinitely healthier there. The Brazilian Disarmament Statute, although still untested, illustrates the enormous scope for reform throughout the region and much of the world.

## 2. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation). 2003. 'Minister blames theft for gun crime rise.' Australian Broadcasting Corporation. 29 December.
- AFP (*Agence France Presse*). 2003a. 'Saudi Arabia Denies National Guardsmen Sold Arms to al-Qaeda.' 20 May.
- , 2003b. 'Thailand Offers Arms Amnesty to Preface Organised Crimes Crackdown.' 20 May.
- Agrell, Siri. 2003. 'Cops Link Gun Rentals to Growth of Gangs.' *National Post* (Don Mills, Ontario). 25 August.
- Alpers, Philip and Conor Twyford. 2003. *Small Arms in the Pacific*. Occasional Paper No. 8. Geneva: Small Arms Survey. March.
- Anderson, W. French. 1996. *Forensic Analysis of the April 11, 1986, FBI Firefight*. Los Angeles: School of Medicine, University of Southern California.
- AP (Associated Press). 2002. 'Mustafa Mashhour, 81, of Muslim Group in Egypt.' 17 November.
- , 2003a. 'Israelis Selling Stolen Army Guns to Palestinians: Report.' 22 January.
- , 2003b. 'Israeli Military Investigating Increasing Gun Theft.' 5 February.
- , 2003c. 'Iraqis Ordered to Disarm by Mid-June.' 5 June.
- APA (Angola Press Agency). 2003. 'Home Minister Defends Disarming of Civilians.' 25 October.
- Ashtakala, Tara. 2003. 'Huns and Guns: Small Arms in South Asia.' *IndoLink.Com*, 6 July.
- Bacoccina, Denize. 2003. 'Brazil Seeks to Curb Gun Crime.' BBC, 23 July.
- Badkhen, Anna. 2003. 'Gun Market Thrives on Dread.' *San Francisco Chronicle*. 26 March, W11.
- Baldor, Lolita C. 2003. 'Plastic Weapon Ban is Small Victory in Difficult Times for Gun Control Advocates.' Associated Press. 10 December.
- Bangkok Post*. 2003a. 'PM: Hand in Your Firearms.' 5 October.
- , 2003b. 'Amnesty Nets Large Quantity of Weapons.' 16 December.
- Barbulescu, Nineta. 2003. *Statement to the First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects*. New York. 8 July.
- Blood, Peter. 1990. *Sri Lanka: A Country Study*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Bloomfield, Lincoln P., Jr. 2003. *Implementation of the United Nations Program of Action for Small Arms and Light Weapons*. New York: US Department of State. 7 July.
- Botchford, John. 2003. 'Group Says Canada Flooded by Illegal Guns.' *Edmonton Sun*. 5 January.
- Canada. 2003. *Canadian Report on the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects*. A/CONF.92/BMS2003/CRP.48 of 12 June.
- Capie, David. 2002. *Small Arms Production and Transfers in Southeast Asia*. Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University.
- , 2003. *The Small Arms Challenge in the Pacific*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.
- Carroll, Rory. 2003. 'Guns For Cash Offer Swamped.' *Guardian*. 17 December.
- CFC (Canadian Firearms Centre). 2002. 'Canadian Firearms Centre summary of costs, 1995–96 to 2001–02'. News release. Toronto. 3 December.
- , 2003a. 'Canada's Gun Control Program: Keeping Firearms Out of the Wrong Hands.' Fact sheet. Toronto. 21 February.
- , 2003b. 'Firearms Registration Grace Period Successful—Solicitor General.' News release. Toronto. 4 July.

- Cha, Ariana Eunjung. 2004. 'New Iraqi Forces Flaws Are Showing.' *Washington Post National Weekly Edition*. 5–11 January, p. 7.
- Chetty, Robert, ed. 2000. *Firearm Use and Distribution in South Africa*. Pretoria: The National Crime Prevention Centre Firearm Programme.
- Clark, Campbell. 2002. 'PM Tries To Deflect Blame For Gun Fiasco.' *Globe and Mail* (Toronto). 5 December.
- Conetta, Carl. 2003. *The Wages of War: Iraqi Combatant and Noncombatant Fatalities in the 2003 Conflict*. Research monograph No. 8. Washington, DC: Project on Defense Alternatives. 20 October.
- Constable, Pamela. 2003. 'Afghans Trade Guns For A Shot At a New Life.' *Washington Post*. 23 October, p. A1.
- Criminal Statistics. 2000. *Criminal Statistics for England and Wales 1999*. London: Home Office. December.
- Cross, Peter, et al. 2003. *Law of the Gun: An Audit of Firearms Control Legislation in the SADC Region*. London: Saferworld. June.
- Davis, Anthony. 2003. 'Thailand Cracks Down on Illicit Arms Trade.' *Jane's Intelligence Review*. December, p. 3035.
- Deepika (Trivandrum). 2003. 'Lanka to issue permits for arms to politicians.' 6 August.
- Dreyfus, Pablo and Aaron Karp. 2003. 'Small Arms Stockpiles and Holdings in Mexico.' Unpublished background report. Geneva: Small Arms Survey.
- Economist* (London). 2003. 'Free For All.' US edition. 17 May.
- EelamNation*. 2003. 'Sri Lanka Security Forces Say Politicians Fail to Return Firearms.' 16 February. <<http://english.eelamnation.com>>.
- Filipov, David. 2003. 'Arms Bazaar Offers Pick of Light Arms.' *Boston Globe*. 26 March, p. A23.
- Filkins, Dexter. 2003. 'U.S. to send Iraqis to Site in Hungary for Police Course.' *New York Times*. 25 August, p. A1.
- Finland. 2001. *Operational and Financial Plan for the Ministry of Defence's Segment of Administration in 2004–07* (White Paper). Helsinki: Defence Ministry. <[http://www.defmin.fi/chapter\\_images/1134\\_ttsenglish.pdf](http://www.defmin.fi/chapter_images/1134_ttsenglish.pdf)>
- Finn, Peter. 2003. 'Al Qaeda Arms Traced to Saudi National Guard.' *Washington Post*. 19 May, p. A1.
- Fisher, Ian. 2003. 'Northern Iraq: A Diverse Band of Volunteers Sends a Warning to America.' *New York Times*. 5 February, p. A12.
- Fleishman, Jeffrey. 2003. 'Baghdad's Packed Morgue Marks a City's Descent into Lawlessness.' *Washington Post*. 16 September.
- Franklin, Jonathan. 2003. 'Soap Stars Join 50,000 in Rainy Rio to Demand Guns Crackdown.' *Guardian* (London). 15 September.
- France. 2003. *Sur la mise en oeuvre du Programme d'Action des Nations Unies, sur la Lutte Contre le Commerce Illicite des Armes Légères et de Petit Calibre, sous tous ses Aspects, adopté lors de la Conférence des Nations Unies a New-York, le 20 Juillet 2001*. New York. April.
- Freedberg, Sydney P. and Connie Humburg. 2003. 'Wandering Weapons: America's Lax Arsenal.' *St Petersburg Times*. 11 May, p. A1.
- Germany. 2003. *Letter dated 29 April 2003 from the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Department for Disarmament Affairs on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects*. A/CONF.92/BMS2003/CRP.11 of 16 June.
- Ghanaweb. 2003. 'Gov't Improves Physical Security of Armouries.' 26 June.
- Ghosh, Nirmal. 2003. 'Thais Shoot Down Thaksin Proposal to Ban Guns.' *Straits Times* (Singapore). 17 September.
- Glauber, Bill. 2003. 'High-Caliber Sales at Baghdad market.' *Chicago Tribune*. 23 April, p. 8.
- GPC (GPC Research). 2002. *Fall 2001 Estimate of Firearms in Canada*. Ottawa: GPC. 20 August.
- Guerrero, Friena P. 2003. 'AFP Admits Firearms Pilfered.' *Business World* (Manila). 1 August, p. 11.
- Gusev, Anatoliy. 2003. 'Shahid Department Store.' *Izvestiya* (Moscow). 12 July (BBC translation).
- Hartley, Thomas and Josephine Mazzuca. 2001. 'Seven out of Ten Canadians Support National Firearms Registry.' *The Gallup Poll* (Toronto). 27 November.
- Hartley, Wyndham. 2003. 'Firearms Act Faces Court Challenge.' *Business Day* (Johannesburg). 8 October.
- Hennop, Etienne. 1999. 'Illegal Firearms in South Africa: Tracking Sources.' *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, Vol. 3, No. 2.
- Hider, James. 2004. 'Iraqi Gun Runners "Too Professional" to be Caught Out.' *The Times* (London). 18 February.
- Hirst, Chrissie. 2002. *Controlling Small Arms Proliferation: The View from Bulgaria*. London: Saferworld.
- Holland, Jesse J. 2003. 'Gun Industry Nears Key Goal.' Associated Press. 10 October.
- Hung, Kwing. 2003. *Firearms Statistics Tables*. Ottawa: Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice, June.
- IISS (International Institute for Strategic Studies). 1989. *The Military Balance 1989–1990*. London: Brassey's and the IISS.
- . 2002. *The Military Balance 2002–2003*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2003. *The Military Balance 2003–2004*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Interpol. Various years. Interpol International Crime Statistics. <<http://www.interpol.int/>>
- Itar-Tass. 2003. 'Russia Backs UN effort to Control Trade in Light and Small Weapons.' 8 July (BBC translation).
- Izzadeen, Ameen. 2003. 'Sri Lanka Peace Process Under Threat?' *South Asia Intelligence Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2. 28 July.
- Jackman, David. 2003. 'Approaching Small Arms Demand Work in the Middle East.' Unpublished manuscript. June.
- Jacobs, James B. 2002. *Can Gun Control Work?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jadwa, Ahmed. 2003. 'A Journey to Basra: Scenes of People and Places (2)'. *Al Sharq al Awsat*, No. 9025. 14 August, p. 6. Translated by Jack Kalpakian.
- Jayasinghe, Jayampathy. 2002. 'Police Tough on Violators.' *Sunday Observer* (Colombo). 6 January.
- Kahwaji, Riad. 2004. 'Slow Rebuilding of Army Could Threaten Iraq's Future.' *Defense News*. 26 January, p. 4.
- Kazakh Commercial Television. 2001. 'Saudi Arabia to Buy Weapons from Kazakh Plants.' 5 October (BBC Worldwide monitoring translation.)
- King, Laura. 2003. 'Surrounded by Chaos in Iraq, Middle Class Takes Up Arms.' *Los Angeles Times*. 12 May.
- Kleck, Gary. 1997. *Targeting Guns: Firearms and Their Control*. Hawthorne, New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Kopel, Dave. 2004. 'Erasing a Clinton legacy: Rolling Back Antigun Regs.' *National Review*, 27 January.
- Lamb, Guy. 2000. 'An Overview of Small Arms Production, Export, Ownership and Proliferation in South Africa.' Unpublished manuscript, 3 February.
- Lemire, Jonathan. 2003. 'Grenade Launcher Loss Stirs Concern.' *New York Daily News*. 28 August.

- Lichtblau, Eric. 2003a. 'Bush in Tight Spot with N.R.A. over Gun Legislation.' *New York Times*. 8 May.
- , 2003b. 'Bipartisan Agreement is Reached on Gun Bill.' *New York Times*. 26 September, p. A12.
- Lott, John R., Jr. 2003a. *The Bias Against Guns*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing.
- , 2003b. 'Armed, and safer, Iraqis.' *New York Post*. 26 June.
- Mahmood, Kazi. 2003. 'Thailand Plans Being Gun-free in Five Years.' *Islam Online*. 22 December. <<http://www.islamonline.net>>
- Matthews, William. 2003. 'U.S. Officials Rap Rifle Buy for Iraqi Corps.' *Defense News*. 22 December.
- McKenna, Thomas. 2003. *Crime Control Not Gun Control in Brazil*. The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TPF). <[http://www.tfp.org/what\\_we\\_do/index/nra\\_brazil.htm](http://www.tfp.org/what_we_do/index/nra_brazil.htm)>
- Metz, Helen Chapin. 1993. 'The Armed Forces: Saudi Arabian National Guard.' In *Saudi Arabia: A Country Guide*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Mexico. 1968. Constitution of the United States of Mexico. Translated from Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Trigésima Quinta Edición, 1967, Editorial Porrúa, S. A., México D. F. Washington, DC: Organisation of American States. <[http://www.oas.org/juridico/MLA/en/mex/en\\_mex-int-text-const.pdf](http://www.oas.org/juridico/MLA/en/mex/en_mex-int-text-const.pdf)>
- , 1972. Ley Federal de Armas de Fuego y Explosivos (Federal Law of Firearms and Explosives). 11-I-1972. Mexico City: United States of Mexico.
- , 2003. Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática (INEGI, National Statistics, Geography and Information Institute) <<http://www.inegi.gob.mx/inegi/default.asp>>
- Mickelborough, Peter. 2004. 'Buyback Scheme Nets 19,000 Handguns.' *Herald Sun* (Melbourne). 1 January.
- Mite, Valentinas. 2003. 'Iraqis Prefer to Remain Armed.' *Asian Times.Com*. 11 June.
- Mouzos, Jenny. 2000. *The Licensing and Registration Status of Firearms Used in Homicide*. Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice, Paper No. 151. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. May.
- , 2002. *Firearms Theft in Australia*. Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice, Paper No. 230. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. January.
- Muggah, Robert. 2003. 'Small Arms Control as a Peace Factor.' *Daily News* (Colombo). 11 October.
- Murphy, Dan. 2003. 'Iraq Awash in Military Weapons.' *Christian Science Monitor*. 20 October.
- Musik, Silke. 2003. 'German Armed Forces Reduce Stock.' *International Firearms Trade*. 1 December, p. 7.
- Naidu, Edwin. 2003. 'One Man, One Gun, States New Law.' *Independent Newspapers* (South Africa). 28 September.
- Nash, Emma. 2003. 'Work Starts on National Gun Register.' *Personal Computer World* (UK). 18 December.
- Nation* (Nairobi). 2003. '8,000 Illicit Firearms Are Destroyed in Crackdown.' 10 October.
- NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). 2003. 'Meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission in Defence Ministers Session.' Press Statement (Brussels). 2 December.
- Naumetz, Tim. 2003. 'Liberals Beat Retreat on Gun Vote.' *CanWest News Service*. 18 February.
- Ngamkham, Wassayos. 2003. 'Guns the "Weapons of Choice" in Murders.' *Bangkok Post*. 15 September.
- Nonis, Anthony and Don Asoka Wijewardena. 2002. 'Firearms Amnesty Falls on Deaf Ears.' *Sunday Observer* (Colombo). 20 January.
- Oliphant, Thomas. 2003. 'Power Grab by the Gun Lobby.' *Boston Globe*. 26 October.
- Owen, Richard and Daniel McGrory. 2001. 'The Man to Really Fear.' *The Times* (London). 11 October.
- Parnell, Sean. 2003. 'Effort to Save Money Means Police Guns Could be Turned on Themselves.' *Courier Mail* (Brisbane). 5 July, p. 32.
- Pattugalan, Gina Rivas. 2003. *Two Years After: Implementation of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms in the Asia-Pacific Region*. Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.
- Poroskov, Nikolai. 2003. 'Army Gold.' *Vremya Novostei*. 13 May, p. 2 (BBC translation).
- Potgieter, Jackie. 2003. 'Illegal Firearms Smuggled Into Kenya.' *Daily Standard* (Nairobi). 17 September.
- Pró Legítima Defesa. 2003. <<http://www.prolegitimadefesa.org.br/pldacao/20030819-conferencia/index.htm>>
- Prothero, P. Mitchell. 2003. 'Coalition Losing War for Iraqi Arms.' *United Press International*. 29 September.
- Pruden, Todd. 2003. 'Army Reserve MPs Train Iraqi Police.' *US Army Reserve News*. 8 December.
- Pyadushkin, Maxim. 2003. 'Arming the Caucasus: Moscow's Accidental Legacy.' In Anna Matveeva and Duncan Hiscock, eds. *The Caucasus: Armed and Divided*. London: Saferworld, ch. 8.
- Reuters. 2003a. 'Afghan Leader Launches Disarmament Drive.' 24 October.
- , 2003b. 'Thai Air Needs No Guards on US Flights—PM.' 30 December.
- San Juan, Joel R. 2003. 'Gun ban "Unconstitutional".' *Manila Times*. 6 October.
- Saudi Arabia. 2003. 'No Substance to Report that Arms Captured Came from National Guard.' Press release. Washington, DC: Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. 21 May.
- Sault Star* (Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario). 2003. 'Bury the Gun Registry.' 26 September.
- Schaffer, Michael Currie. 2003. 'A Glut of Gun Buyers.' *Philadelphia Inquirer*. 7 May, p. 1.
- Schronen, Johan. 2003. 'Executors Face Arrest over Dead Men's Guns.' *Cape Argus* (Cape Town). 19 September.
- Sebok, Anthony J. 2003. 'A Recent Ruling by Judge Weinstein Suggests that in the Future, Lawsuits against the Gun Industry May Succeed.' Find Law.Com. 18 August. <<http://writ.news.findlaw.com/sebok/20030818.html>>
- Seper, Jerry. 2003. '800 U.S. Guns Issued To Officials Still Missing.' *Washington Times*. 1 July, p. 3.
- Serbia. 2003. *Letter dated 19 May 2003 from the Permanent Mission of Serbia and Montenegro to the United Nations addressed to the Department for Disarmament Affairs on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects*. A/CONF.92/BMS2003/CRP.33 of 18 June.

- Shashkov, Alexander. 2002. '8,000 Firearms Stolen from Army Stocks in 7 Years—Official.' Itar-Tass. 31 January.
- Simon, Alina. 2003. 'Weapons Seized Were Stolen from Army Camp.' *New Straits Times* (Malaysia). 28 March, p. 10.
- Sloca, Paul. 2003a. 'Gun Used in Plant Shooting Once Belonged to the Missouri State Highway Patrol.' Associated Press. 3 July.
- . 2003b. 'State Looks for Alternative to Trading Used Police Force Guns.' Associated Press. 18 September.
- Small Arms Survey. 2001. *Small Arms Survey 2001: Profiling the Problem*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2002. *Small Arms Survey 2002: Counting the Human Cost*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2003. *Small Arms Survey 2003: Development Denied*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Soriano, Cesar G. 2003. 'All of Baghdad Keeps and Bears Arms.' *USA Today*. 13 May.
- South Africa. 2003. *Statement to the First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects*. New York. 7 July.
- Subramanian, Nirupama, 2001. 'Sri Lanka to Crack Down on Illegal Arms.' *The Hindu* (Madras). 17 December.
- Talev, Iliya. 2001. 'Arms Business Conflicts Divulged its Scope.' *Kapital* (Sofia). 3 March (FBIS translation).
- TamilNet*. 2002. 'SLA Asked for EPDP Weapons over Journalist's Murder.' 11 November.
- . 2003. 'Fasting Sri Lankan' Soldiers Demand Fair Treatment.' 9 April.
- Taheri, Amir. 2003. 'The Fires to Come.' *Newsweek International*. 31 December, p. 22.
- UK (United Kingdom). Home Office. 2004. *Guide to the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office. 20 January.
- UN (United Nations). 1998. *United Nations International Study on Firearms Regulation*. Vienna: United Nations.
- . 2003. *World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision. Highlights*. Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. New York: United Nations.
- UNCICP (UN Centre for International Crime Prevention). 2002. *Seventh United Nations Survey of Crime Trends, 1998–2000*. Vienna: UNCICP.
- UNODC (UN Office on Drugs and Crime). 2003. *Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems*. Vienna: UNODC. <[http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime\\_cicp\\_surveys.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/crime_cicp_surveys.html)>
- Uruguay. 2003. Urunet <<http://www.urunet.com.uy/>>
- US (United States). ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms). 2002. *Crime Gun Trace Reports (2000) National Report*. Washington, DC: ATF. July.
- . GAO (Government Accounting Office). 2003. *Firearms Controls*. GAO-03-688. Washington, DC: GAO. June.
- Vargas, Anthony. 2003. 'PNP Vows to Strictly Enforce Gun Ban.' *Manila Times*. 15 December.
- Viva Rio. 2003a. 'Brazilian Senate Approves Bill on Gun Carry Ban.' 25 July.
- . 2003b. 'Congress Bans Right to Carry Firearms in Brazil.' 24 October.
- VoA (Voice of America). 2003. 'Brazil Moves Toward Increasing Gun Control.' 23 July.
- Vobejda, Barbara, David B. Ottaway, and Sarah Cohen. 1999. 'Recycled D.C. Police Guns Tied to Crimes.' *Washington Post*. 12 November.
- Washington Post*. 2003. 'Tamil Rebels Set Off Explosion', 8 February, p. A22.
- . 2004. 'Misfires on the Hill.' 1 January.
- Wezeman, Pieter D. and Siemon T. Wezeman. 1996. *Dutch Surplus Weapons*. Paper No. 5. Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion. July.
- White House. 2003. *U.S. National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*. Washington, DC: White House. February.
- Winton, Richard. 2003. 'Panel Oks Ban on Sale of .50 caliber guns.' *Los Angeles Times*. 28 May.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Other contributors

Philip Alpers, James Bevan, Wendy Cukier, Pablo Dreyfus, Emile LeBrun, and Ben Lessing.