

India

First Committee of the General Assembly (DISEC)

Illicit Small Arms Trade

Henry M. Gunn High School

Less than a century ago, India wasn't even an independent state; merely a dominion of the vast British Empire, and a speck in the world of international politics. It took a century of hard work for the passionate resistance of the Indians to persevere, and for a new country to be created. Yet, despite all this hardship, remnants of the past were still very much in place in India, such as the Mongol Invasions, which resulted in the formation of Pakistan due to religious differences.

Despite this tragic event, India and Pakistan both have gone on and become important parts of the world's fastest growing major economy. India has experienced its ups and downs and obstacles in its path to becoming a major player in world affairs. Despite this, it is plainly obvious that India is on a trend upwards towards becoming an international power, one that can compete with other major countries. However, despite being such a powerful country, India still faces domestic problems comparable to that of third-world countries. Law systems still need improvement, which is why the illicit small arms trade is such a problem, especially in India. Because of the arms trade, violence is commonplace even in the biggest cities like Mumbai, Kolkata (Calcutta) or Delhi.

The Illicit Small Arms Trade is directly linked to the high amount of violence in many countries, especially ones in Latin America or Africa. For the most part, representatives of companies that produce firearms export them to arms dealers in countries where arms are hard to obtain or are illegal. The arms are then distributed to a variety of people and organizations, from everyday citizens and hunting/shooting clubs to rebel groups. The illicit small arms trade first became a major world problem during the Cold War. In order to support certain sides in proxy wars,

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numerous small arms would be distributed by the USSR and the US to their respective allies.

However, after those conflicts ended, most of the weapons were never officially collected and as a result, those weapons were and still are circulating in the black market. This is essentially how numerous terrorist organizations transform from radical crowds of people to dangerous, armed groups capable of harming anyone or anything that opposes them.

The Illicit Small Arms Trade is composed of two markets; the black and grey market. Both markets deal with the proliferation of small arms, but the black market occurs without government approval and as a result, the trading that occurs is illegal. Black markets are found most often in corrupted states where the government doesn't crack down on these illegal transactions, or in countries in a state of war where the citizens can't obtain certain items. The black, which is also known as the underground market can be divided into four major economies; the illegal, unreported, unrecorded and the informal economy. The Illicit Small Arms Trade is most often linked to the illegal economy, but also has connections to the other three. The illegal is generally all the income obtained from economic activities violating the legitimate scope of commerce. This includes the sale of all prohibited goods and services, including prostitution, the arms trade and drug trafficking. The grey market is the market where all transfers occur through legitimate and governmental means. However, agents or individuals take advantage of this by intentionally avoiding government policy and using loopholes. An example of this occurred during the American Reagan Administration, where members of the executive office sold weapons to Iran through Israel to free American hostages in Lebanon. Additionally, some of the

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funds were then sent to fund the Contras in Nicaragua who were fighting against the Cuban-backed, communist Sandinistas. However, since these measures were not approved by congress, it made the transactions illegal and some of these officials were sentenced to time in prison.

The three biggest consequences to arms trading are that it worsens civil wars and regional conflicts, arms terrorist organizations, drug cartels, as well as other armed groups, and contribute to violent crime and the spreading of valuable technology into the wrong hands. In countries torn by civil war or regional conflicts such as Syria or numerous countries in Africa, selling these weapons only adds more fuel to the fire. The conflict in an area will only worsen if the fighters there are given access to weapons that they will only use to prolong the conflict. Despite the fact that placing stricter enforcements on the UN Embargos already in place would harm the economy of certain businesses and countries that participate in the arms trade, the lives of human beings should not be sacrificed for an illegal economy. Millions of dollars are already being poured into the military of foreign countries and UN peacekeepers who are trying to stop these conflicts and the illegal transaction of these weapons just increases the number of lives, money and time wasted.

Moreover, the illicit small arms trade only worsens world problems such as human trafficking and the fight against terrorism. Cutting off the supply lines for the organizations that commit these unlawful actions would render them extremely ineffective, and would also allow the

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military of foreign countries or UN peacekeepers to be able to combat these threats more effectively. These small arms and light weapons result in over 500,000 deaths every year, and indirectly cause infrastructural damage such as the destruction of schools, hospitals and offices.

Furthermore, the illicit small arms trade leads to larger transactions, such as the sale of anti-aircraft weapons to terrorist organizations. The sale of this valuable technology to terrorist organizations will make them a greater threat and could cause massive massacres in countries not equipped to deal with such threats. Yet, these transfers are often clouded by legal governmental sales of their own weapons to other foreign governments, which makes it difficult to track the illegal spread of weapons despite knowing the location of the countries.

India plays a significant role in the export or import of small arms, and the fact that there are only 3.6 guns per 100 residents is an illusion as that number means 40 million weapons are owned by people in India. This estimate includes illicit weapons, as in India, there are only 6.3 million legal firearms. As a result, around 84-85% of the small arms in India are illegal, which is something that needs to be addressed.

However, the problem is that many Indians feel the need to own weapons since they feel they must have a way to protect themselves. Even though guns only account for 8-9% of all homicides in India, 43,355 murders occur yearly (as of 2014), and citizens feel that they must have a way to protect themselves. The biggest problem is not that guns are causing the deaths like in some countries, but the deaths are empowering people to seek solutions to protect

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themselves since the government is obviously not doing a good enough job. What India needs to address now is to find a way to make the citizens feel safe, so they don't feel obligated to obtain illegal weapons in order to protect themselves and the people around them. Domestic insecurity is often a reason people seek firearms illegally as it is an easier process, and increasing the safety within a country can help decrease the demand for

The delegate of India believes that there are many things that can be done to solve the current issue and would like to share his ideas. Although there is already a treaty regarding the arms trade in existence, the Arms Trade Treaty, the delegate believes that there are inherent flaws with it and would either propose amending it or creating a new resolution. As a result, the delegate would discourage all other nations who have not signed it to not become a signatory.

The first issue that must be addressed regards private security company. The delegate believes that private security companies, especially ones that operate in areas prone to conflict, need to be regulated. Numerous private security companies either sell weapons to governments or terrorist groups in areas of conflict, or provide security services for things such as bodyguards, data collection as well as many other things. Although these services are useful when used right, they are also prone to doing illicit things, such as knowingly or unknowingly guarding an illicit weapons production factory, participating in conflicts that the UN are attempting to bring to an end and other illicit actions. Also, these companies also sell weapons through the black market and the sale of these arms need to be regulated. Although these arms are legally obtained, it is vital that their whereabouts be consistently reported so these arms don't fall into the wrong

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hands. The delegate of India respects the need for privacy that these companies have, but would like to strongly emphasize that human lives are not worth this extra veil of privacy.

The second issue that must be addressed is what procedure countries utilize towards the effective tracking and combatting of the illicit small arms trade. The delegate believes that in order to ensure national sovereignty, countries should be allowed to operate whatever policy they choose to utilize as long as after a certain amount of time, it is seen as beneficial towards the problem.

However, since the illicit small arms trade is something that involves the member nations of numerous countries, if after a certain period of time, progress has been deemed to not have been made with that country, then the states involved will meet together to propose a new plan.

However, as to be respectful of national sovereignty, the state alone can choose whether to adopt that plan or not, though it should be mindful of the economic or diplomatic consequences that might occur if it chooses to take no action.

Furthermore, an international procedure regarding states transferring weapons to other states needs to be firmly established and delegates equal responsibility to both countries. It is the responsibility of both countries to ensure the cargo is transferred. The delegate would recommend that representatives of both nations must be on site when the arms are being checked for transfer, being transferred and when the transaction has been completed. If the cargo is lost it is the responsibility of both nations; the sender nation is obligated to pay half of the cost as its own representatives were there to ensure that the cargo was safely transferred.

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The fourth action that the delegate of India would like to implement is to increase security along the borders of provinces or states that are known to be illegal production hubs of small arms domestically. This way, the illegal transport of these arms can be locked down more easily and the source of these arms can also be traced with more efficiency. Moreover, this will also help combat rural violence as arms production centers are often areas of high-conflict. By combatting violence more efficiently and having militia stationed in unstable areas, it will also help make citizens feel more safe and lessen their instinctive need for protection. This will lead to less citizens trying to illegally obtain weapons for their safety.

The final thing that the delegate of India would do is to implement state physiological programs in order to make citizens feel more safe about their surroundings. The reason why the illicit arms trade flourishes is that people don't feel safe about their surroundings but in certain countries, it is an extremely difficult process to obtain weapons. If the everyday people in cities feel secure about their lives, then they will have no need to obtain arms to protect themselves and the people around them. When the demand decreases, so does the supply and the illicit small arms trade will become a less than viable economic option for many.

The problem with the Arms Trade Treaty is that it does not require the governments of foreign countries to bring the standards of the procedures which they use in facing the small arms trade up to a decent level. In other words, the treaty is abused by nations who do not consider the illicit arms trade a problem and no punishment is given. Moreover, the treaty does not delegate

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equal responsibility to the two or more countries involved in a governmental arms trade, which it should. As it is far from a complete solution, the delegate discourages all other delegates from voting for it and hopes to find a better solution to the problem during the conference.

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