

Arms Control: What Not To Do

The left has some remarkably silly ideas about law, international law and guns. Now Amnesty International, Oxfam and the International Action Network on Small Arms (Iansa) have banded together to campaign for **strict controls** on national and international arms trades. They call this the Control Arms campaign.

Under the treaty they propose, governments would be held accountable for not having gun control laws in their own country. Never mind that, as we have written before, gun control **does not reduce** gun crime and does reduce personal freedom. But why should things like facts and arguments be allowed to get in the way of such a ~~pointless, stupid waste of paper~~ necessary security measure?

The treaty would also make it an offence to sell weapons to countries that might use them to commit atrocities, as well as restricting certain weapons such as landmines that would be banned according to the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. The US has not signed that Treaty because it is **fatally flawed** as such proposals very often are.

So who exactly is going to decide which weapons transfers constitute a risk? The answer implicitly given in their ~~unintentionally entertaining~~ highly cogent document *Shattered Lives* (available [here](#)) is: the United Nations. So in summary: the Control Arms campaign wants to take control of the flow of arms away from democratic states and hand it over to a **corrupt** organisation that **encourages terrorism** and is dominated by the very governments whose existence depends on the misuse of weapons. Israel, for instance, wouldn't be able to buy so much as a peashooter, while the UN would be falling over itself to give Yasser Arafat nuclear bombs – or at least F-16s – in the name of fairness. Fortunately the campaign is unlikely to succeed, since too many of the UN's influential members are themselves **enthusiastic sellers of weapons to corrupt dictatorships**.

By the way, selling arms to dictatorships is not always wrong. It may be the right thing to do if the dictator is **an ally in the destruction of a more dangerous dictator**, or of more dangerous terrorists. This is because it is not guns that cause human rights abuses: they are physical objects that can be used for good or bad purposes. The lion's share of human rights abuses are

the result of evil, failed ideologies like Islamism and Communism which seek to eliminate the institutions of rational and peaceful decision making. By seeking a UN monopoly on decisions about who gets to be armed and who has to be disarmed, the Control Arms campaign is trying to do exactly the same.

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UN Gun Control: Enabler of Genocide

Those who advocate UN gun control don't seem to have learned the lesson of the UN's previous great experiment in gun control - the arms embargo upon the former Yugoslavia. Since the Serbs had already grabbed the contents of the Yugoslavian national army, the main effect of the arms embargo was to prevent the Bosnian Moslems from getting enough heavy weapons to defend themselves. The result was "ethnic cleansing," in which the Bosnian Serbs would simply shell a Bosnian Moslem city with artillery, well out of the range of any small arms the Bosnian Moslems might have had, reduce it to rubble, then send in the infantry to exterminate those remaining alive.

by [timstarr](#) on Sat, 10/18/2003 - 18:25 | [reply](#)