

BOOK SUMMARY

THE SMALL ARMS TRADE

By Rachel Stohl, Matthew Schroeder and Dan Smith



2. Improving the Natural Environment:

Technological advances increase productivity of resources use to a point where people worldwide can enjoy improved living standards and amenities with dramatically reduced environmental harm.

3. Promote Innovation and Discovery:

Innovation is the driving force of our economy; it is the only hope for continued US leadership in the global economy. This includes innovation in education. The freedom to explore the unknown is the ornament and obligation of an advanced society.

4. Reform Government management of S&T:

Restore unbiased science and technology advice to the Congress and President and ensure that the actions of government and information available to government officials are accessible to voters except when restricted by clear, and challengeable, rules of classification.

The US scientific community has an obligation both to help the new Congress define an agenda in these critical areas and build a national consensus for action. It's clear that none of the critical challenges facing the federal government can be resolved unless creative, dedicated people are willing to take the time to engage in the debate and encouraged to take key administrative positions in the federal government.

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The *Small Arms Trade* provides a gripping overview of the global impact of nearly 640 million small arms and light weapons – pistols, carbines, assault rifles, light machine guns and surface to air missiles – in circulation around the world. In the hands of irresponsible government armies, rebel groups, and terrorists, these weapons cause tremendous human suffering.

The wars that ravaged Central America and that continue in Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, the Sudan and dozens of other countries – wars in which millions of innocent men, women, and children have died and millions more have been deprived of economic opportunities – are fought primarily with small arms. Drug lords use them to eliminate competitors and assassinate government officials; abusive governments use them to suppress internal dissent and silence opposition; insurgents use them to kill soldiers on patrol; terrorists use them to elicit fear...the list goes on and on.

“Small arms are the true weapons of individual destruction,” said Rachel Stohl, senior analyst at the World Security Institute’s Center for Defense Information. “Controlling these deadly weapons requires national governments, regional organizations, and international institutions to work cooperatively. They must simultaneously control supply, take existing weapons out of circulation, end misuse, and address demand.”

The “terrorist delight” – portable, guided missiles that have become a favorite weapon of terrorists and insurgents – are plentiful, easy to use, and extremely effective. Nearly a million missiles have been produced by over 20 countries, and thousands of those missiles are now outside of government control.

“Shoulder-fired missiles are a terrorist’s dream and a law enforcement nightmare,” said FAS analyst Matt Schroeder. “For less than the cost of a used car, a terrorist can cripple a commercial airliner, and with it the airline industry.”

This guide reveals the disturbing reality behind the murky underworld of international

arms trading. Full of insight and anticipating the danger of ever lighter and more powerful weapons, this is required reading for anyone who wishes to understand one of the key threats to development, prosperity and international peace in the world today.

MATT SCHROEDER is the Manager of the Arms Sales Monitoring Project at the Federation of American Scientists (FAS). Since joining FAS in February 2002, he has researched and written on U.S. arms transfers, arms export policies, and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

RACHEL STOHL is Senior Analyst at the Center for Defense Information in Washington, DC, and is chairperson of the Small Arms Working Group.

COLONEL DAN SMITH retired from the U.S. army in 1992 and is currently Senior Fellow, Military and Peaceful Prevention Policy at the Friends Committee on National Legislation. Visit his blog at <http://quakerscolonel.blogspot.com>.

“The international trade in small arms has large consequences. This book goes a long way in clearing the ideological fog that so often clouds the analysis of a problem that urgently needs the kind of clearheaded, well informed analysis found in these pages.” **Moisés Naim, Editor of Foreign Policy magazine and author of Illicit: How Smugglers, Traffickers and copycats are hijacking the global economy**

“The Beginner’s Guide is a tremendous resource for all those who wish to learn about the pandemic of smalls arms violence. Countless people each year are killed or left with debilitating injuries caused by these weapons in conflicts around the globe, conflicts fuelled by the small arms trade. For those who wish to help prevent this needless suffering, this book will provide invaluable insight.” **Martin Butcher, Senior Advisory for policy and programs, Physicians for social responsibility**

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