

# mind•full: a brainsnack for future leaders with ethical appetites

Volume I • Number One • February 1996 • Student Pugwash USA

## international weapons trade

Weapons worth billions of dollars are transferred each year as buyers and sellers wheel and deal in the international arms bazaar. While a few notable debacles capture media attention, such as the Iran-Contra scandal, most of this trade occurs without public awareness of its extent or impact. Given the volatile nature of international relations—the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) recorded 31 major armed conflicts in 1994 alone—critics of the arms trade say that too little attention is paid to the destabilizing role weapons transfers play in fueling conflict.

Transfers of military equipment raise many complicated issues. From rifles to advanced fighter aircraft, weapons bought and sold on the international market range in sophistication from home-made to high-tech. These diverse weapons technologies are often promoted like any other commodity, with most decisions made in terms of immediate economic gain and little examination of the power they can unleash on the international system.

Some argue that restrictions on weapons transfers unnecessarily inhibit governments' and industries' ability to compete in the international market. And yet, arms control advocates claim that the devastation wrought by wars and ethnic conflicts is evidence enough that conventional weapons transfers are a threat to international peace and stability, and require more stringent regulation.

The mission of Student Pugwash USA is to promote the socially responsible application of science and technology in the 21st century. As a student organization, Student Pugwash USA encourages young people to examine the ethical, social, and global implications of science and technology, and to make these concerns a guiding focus of their academic and professional endeavors.

The **mind•full** series encourages readers to explore crucial ethical dilemmas associated with the application of science and technology.

STUDENT



PUGWASH

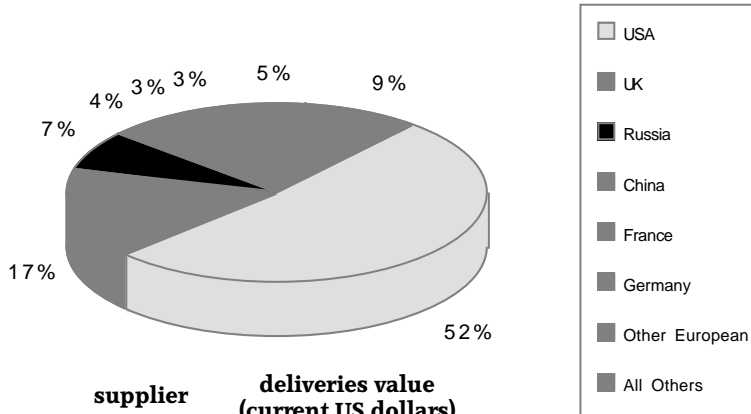
U S A

# go figure!

In looking at the available statistics, major trends are easy to identify. The market is currently dominated by a few suppliers: the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, France, and Germany. In contrast, most weapons are purchased by countries in the developing world. While the overall weapons market has shrunk since the height of the Cold War, competition for conventional weapons exports is becoming fiercer every day.

Unfortunately, the lack of available data on conventional weapons transfers is a major source of frustration for analysts trying to draw a more detailed picture of the global weapons trade. For example, most of the available data deals only with major weapons, such as transfers of tanks and fighter planes. Researchers looking for information on small arms and light weapons, responsible for most of the deaths in conflicts today, must often rely on journalistic accounts and other anecdotal evidence.

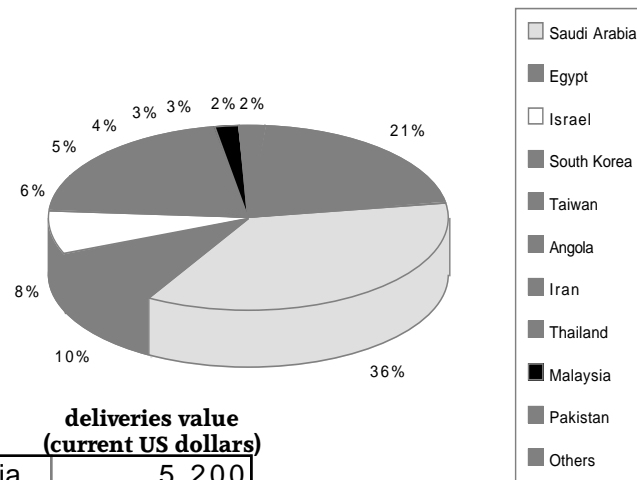
## arms deliveries worldwide leading exporters, 1994



| supplier       | deliveries value<br>(current US dollars) |
|----------------|--|
| USA            | 10,514                                   |
| UK             | 3,400                                    |
| Russia         | 1,400                                    |
| China          | 800                                      |
| France         | 700                                      |
| Germany        | 700                                      |
| Other European | 1,000                                    |
| All Others     | 1,800                                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>20,314</b>                            |

# 1994

## arms deliveries to developing nations leading recipients, 1994



| recipient    | deliveries value<br>(current US dollars) |
|--------------|--|
| Saudi Arabia | 5,200                                    |
| Egypt        | 1,500                                    |
| Israel       | 1,100                                    |
| South Korea  | 900                                      |
| Taiwan       | 700                                      |
| Angola       | 600                                      |
| Iran         | 400                                      |
| Thailand     | 400                                      |
| Malaysia     | 300                                      |
| Pakistan     | 300                                      |
| Others       | 3,000                                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>14,400</b>                            |

**Source** for data in charts and tables: Richard Grimmett, "Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 1987-1994," CRS Report for Congress, 95-862 F, Congressional Research Service, 1995.

# in control or out of it?

In the wake of the Gulf War, there was some agreement that the unchecked flow of conventional weapons was at least partly responsible for dangerous military build-ups in unstable regions of the world. Yet, when it came to making difficult choices necessary to establish control, governments did not convert their publicly stated concerns into policy.

Consensus sometimes emerges around controlling transfers to "rogue nations," such as Iran and Iraq. Disagreements, however, are far more common. Governments rarely agree on the level or types of control which should be placed on weapons to other destinations. These discrepancies are often confusing and inconsistent, drawing attention to the lack of a coherent international approach to the arms trade. For example, Saudi Arabia is the top customer for US weapons. Yet Germany does not allow arms exports to the Saudis due to the tensions in the Middle East. Sweden, Italy, and Portugal have embargoed arms sales to Indonesia, citing its poor human rights record (on the same grounds, the US has banned small arms sales to that country). Meanwhile, the UK continues to be one of Indonesia's major arms suppliers, providing such advanced equipment as Hawk fighter jets.

Often the legal statutes governing a country's arms trade policy are only as strong as the leaders' political will to control the trade. In the US, for example, before allowing a sale, lawmakers are required to consider a country's human rights record and the prospects that a sale may increase the possibility of an outbreak or escalation of conflict. And yet,

## geek speak

"Arms transfers (imports and exports) represent the international transfer (under terms of grant, credit, barter, or cash) of military equipment, usually referred to as **'conventional,'** including weapons of war, parts thereof, ammunition, support equipment, and other commodities designed for military use. . . . **Dual use equipment,** which can have application in both military and civilian sectors, is included when its primary mission is identified as military. . . ." *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1993-1994*, US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, February 1995, p. 169.

| 1994 exports   | battle tanks | armored combat vehicles | large caliber artillery | combat aircraft | attack helicopters | war-ships | missiles/launchers |
|----------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| US             | 702          | 1,036                   | 121                     | 82              | 5                  | 0         | 316                |
| UK             | 18           | 35                      | 88                      | 43              | 2                  | 9         | 196                |
| Russia         | 30           | 328                     | 129                     | 2               | 0                  | 1         | 436                |
| China          | 82           | 0                       | 0                       | 0               | 0                  | 6         | 0                  |
| France         | 5            | 72                      | 0                       | 2               | 1                  | 0         | 56                 |
| Germany        | 181          | 1,170                   | 546                     | 24              | 2                  | 18        | 1,020              |
| Belgium        | 0            | 277                     | 0                       | 25              | 0                  | 0         | 0                  |
| Czech Republic | 40           | 177                     | 0                       | 51              | 0                  | 0         | 0                  |
| Other          | 197          | 731                     | 105                     | 7               | 2                  | 2         | 74                 |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>1,255</b> | <b>3,826</b>            | <b>989</b>              | <b>236</b>      | <b>12</b>          | <b>36</b> | <b>2,098</b>       |

**Source:** The British American Security Information Council, based on 1995 UN Register data. Figures reflect quantities of weapons exported as reported by suppliers. For primary source, see "United Nations Register of Conventional Arms," Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations General Assembly, A/50/547, 13 October 1995 and amendments.

one analyst notes that 45 out of 50 countries involved in ethnic and territorial conflicts during 1993-94 received US weaponry or military technology prior to the conflict. (Hartung, "US Weapons at War," p. 1.)

There are three mutually reinforcing types of policies on the arms transfer restraint continuum: transparency, oversight, and control. Transparency efforts promote a greater sharing of information on arms trade policies and the actual transactions themselves. Oversight refers to the process of regulating arms transfers. Control measures limit the actual quantity or quality of weapons transferred.

### **an arrangement, of course!**

Under the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies, the 28 participating countries have agreed to promote "greater transparency and responsibility with regard to transfers of armaments and sensitive dual-use goods and technologies." The arrangement will focus on transfers to countries of "concern." Membership currently includes the 16 NATO allies, plus: Russia, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the Slovak Republic. (Press Statement, High Level Meeting of 28 States, Wassenaar, Netherlands, 11 and 12 September 1995.)

Formally established in December 1995, the Wassenaar Arrangement is the most significant arms trade control effort to surface in recent years. Still under negotiation, however, it is unclear exactly what shape the arrangement will ultimately take and how effective it will be.

## **what's a wassenaar?**

### **the register**

Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1991, the UN Register of Conventional Arms provides a yearly report on member countries' imports and exports. It details quantities of seven categories of weapons exported and imported in the given year: battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, and missiles and missile launchers. Participation in the register is not mandatory and there is no provision for verification of the reports. Quite often the same weapons deal is listed differently by the importer and exporter. However, with over 80 countries submitting data each year, the information made public is a helpful transparency measure.

The third UN Register of Conventional Arms was released in October 1995. It highlighted a continued flow of weapons to the Balkans, the Middle East, and around the world. A designated panel of experts tasked with discussing the future development of the Register failed to agree on any means to make the Register more inclusive or effective. Some fear that without serious efforts to improve the Register, its effectiveness will deteriorate.

### **codes of conduct**

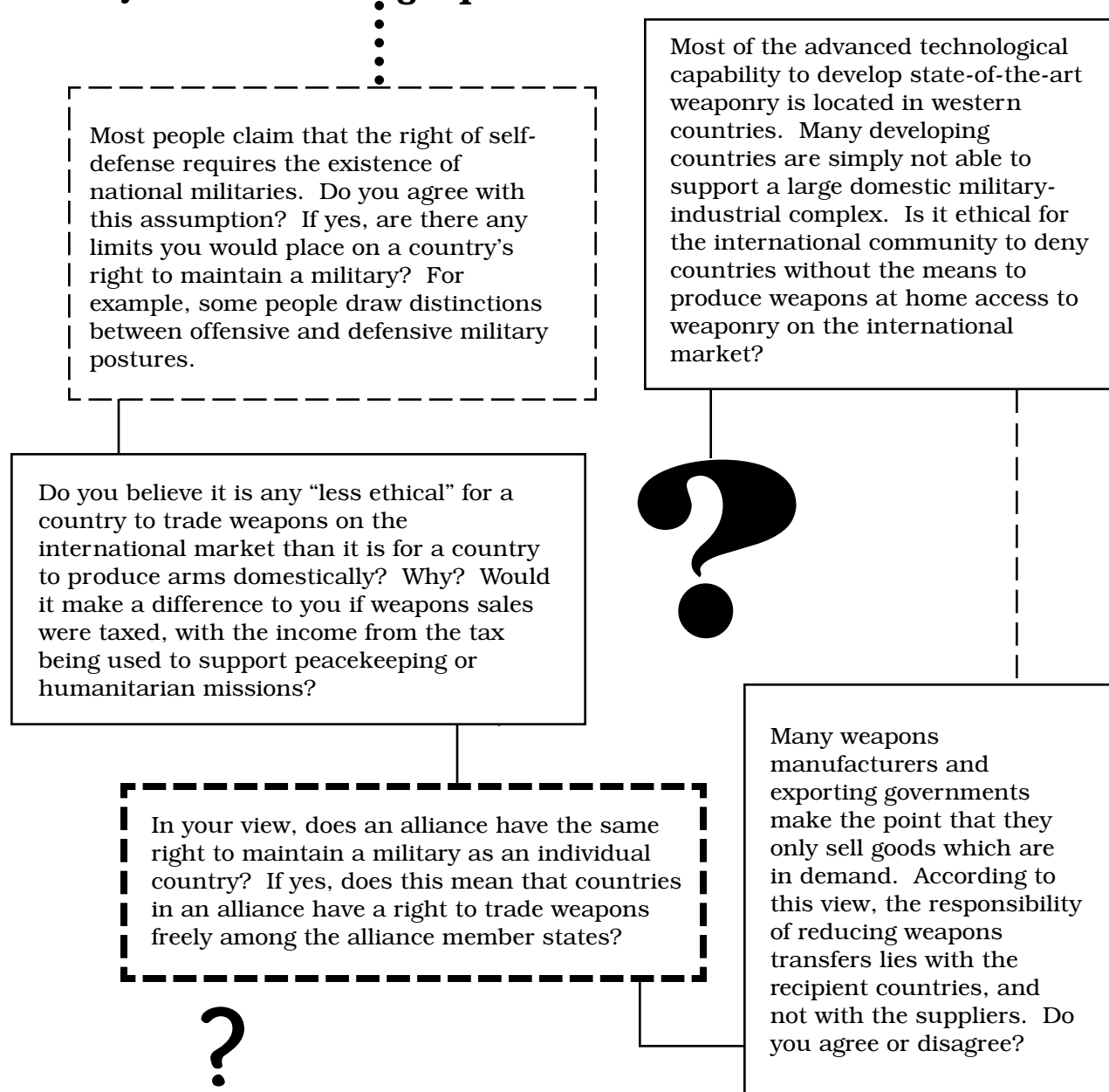
A number of initiatives are also underway to develop codes of conduct which establish criteria under which states consider arms sales. Guidelines take into consideration: the recipient country's human rights record, the country's internal and regional stability, and the effects arms purchases would have on the recipient country's economy. Such codes of conduct exist or are being developed in: the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, South Africa, and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, former President of Costa Rica and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, is developing an international code of conduct, to reinforce national and regional initiatives, which he hopes to introduce at the United Nations with the support of a commission of fellow Nobel Laureates.

# (anything but a) conclusion

The international weapons trade raises very clear dilemmas involving the role of science and technology in society. The central question is, “Are weapons like other goods bought and sold on the international market?” Most people agree that they are unique. Few agree beyond that. How, whether, or why the trade should be controlled, limited, or abolished is a hotly-debated topic. The purpose of this paper is to encourage this dialogue. The questions below highlight some of the challenges—such as how to balance personal ethical considerations against economic factors. Most of your answers will be based on your experience and your vision of the world you would like to live in.

How do **you** answer the **tough questions**



Given that 45 of the 50 countries involved in ethnic and territorial warfare in 1993-94 received weaponry from the US in the period leading up to the conflict (Hartung, "US Weapons At War," p. 1), do you think the US has acted irresponsibly? The US is unquestionably the world's leading arms exporter. Do you think this role places a special burden on the US to seek arms trade restraint? Why or why not?

If you owned a company that produced weapons and felt you were faced with the prospect of either laying people off or trying to sell weapons overseas, which would you do? If you did legally sell those weapons overseas (keeping thousands of your employees in work), but those weapons were then used by another country to repress or kill its citizens, would you or the people who work in your company bear any individual responsibility?

Is it ethical to deny a repressed people access to weapons which they believe would allow them to gain independence from a government? Who should decide when it is okay to sell weapons to people seeking to overthrow a government?



According to the United Nations Development Program's 1994 Human Development Report, developing nations spent over \$25 billion a year on weapons imports. Yet 1.3 billion people were unable to meet even their most basic needs, 2 million children died of preventable or curable infections, 192 million children were malnourished, and 900 million people in developing countries could not read or write. In addition, the Congressional Research Service reports that developing nations were the top recipients of weapons, with 72% of all arms transfer agreements in 1994. Are weapons sales therefore either a primary or partial cause of world poverty?

Who should decide on weapons deals? Are they solely a matter of national sovereignty, or does the international community have a right to judge the merit of particular sales? On what grounds would a particular deal be "acceptable?" How strongly would you weigh considerations of the effect certain deals would have on the military balance in a region, or the likelihood of accelerating a regional arms race? What role should profit play? Under what circumstances (if any) would you prohibit sales?



Some people claim that the arms trade's toll goes beyond taking resources away from other social needs and providing the means of war. These critics of the arms trade say it fosters an enduring culture of violence, with effects felt long after a given conflict may end. Do you believe the arms trade is in any way responsible for domestic or national violence?

**up front**

- *Arms Sales Monitor*, Lora Lumpe (editor)—a newsletter highlighting US government policies on arms exports and conventional weapons proliferation. It is published by the Federation of American Scientists Fund, 307 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002 USA. Tel: 202-675-1018. E-mail: llumpe@fas.org or on the Web: <http://www.fas.org/pub/gen/fas/asmf/>
- *Arms Trade News*, Thomas Cardamone, Jr. (editor)—published monthly by Council for a Livable World Education Fund, 110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Suite 211, Washington, DC 20002. Tel: 202-546-0962 Fax: 202-546-5142. On the Web, <http://www.clw.org/pub/clw/welcome.html>
- *BASIC Reports*, Bronwyn Brady (editor)—a newsletter on international security policy, which regularly includes articles detailing developments on international diplomatic efforts to control the arms trade, published by the British American Security Information Council. BASIC also publishes occasional papers and reports on the international weapons trade. In the US: 1900 L Street, NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20036. Tel: 202-785-1266 Fax: 202-387-6298 E-mail: basicusa@igc.apc.org In London: Carrara House, 20 Embankment Place, London WC2N 6NN. Tel: +44 (171) 925-0862 Fax: +44 (171) 925-0861 E-mail: basic@gn.apc.org On the Web: <http://www.igc.apc.org/basic/>

**in depth**

- *American Arms Supermarket*, Michael T. Klare (author)—this book is one of the standard works looking at the extent and impact of the US arms trade. Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press, 1984.
- *And Weapons for All: How America's Multibillion-Dollar Arms Trade Warps our Foreign Policy and Subverts Democracy at Home*, William D. Hartung (author)—an insightful examination and critique of the forces driving US arms trade policy and the implications that policy has domestically and internationally. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994 (hardcover) and 1995 (paperback).
- *Light Weapons and International Security*, Jasjit Singh (editor)—a book-length publication of the proceedings of an October 1995 workshop on light weapons sponsored in New Delhi by BASIC and the Indian and US affiliates of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. Includes analysis of light weapons transfers in South Asia and southern Africa, the linkages between light weapons transfers and the drug trade, the role of light weapons in internal conflict, proposals for gathering data, and an overview of proposals to control light weapons transfers. New Delhi: Indian Pugwash Society and the British American Security Information Council, 1996.
- *The Technology of Killing: A Military and Political History of Antipersonnel Weapons*, Eric Prokosch (author)—an interesting combination of technical information and historical accounts of the use of antipersonnel weapons. London: Zed Books, 1995.
- "US Weapons at War," William D. Hartung (author)—provides examples of instances in which US troops have faced US weapons on the battlefield. *World Policy Papers*, June 1995. World Policy Institute, Arms Trade Resource Center, New School for Social Research, 65 Fifth Avenue, Suite 413, New York, New York, 10003. Tel: (212) 229-5808 Fax: (212) 229-5579.

**on screen**

- *Armed and Dangerous*—examines the consequences of the small arms trade in the US and abroad, and proposes specific steps to increase transparency. Produced by the Center for Defense Information (see above for address).
- *The Black Market in US Arms Sales*—reveals a dangerous, growing market in covert weapons sales. Produced by the Center for Defense Information, 1500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005 USA. Tel: 202-862-0700 Fax: 202-862-0708.

## check it out !

## cyberspace

**top picks**

Arms Transfer Working Group—<http://www.fas.org/pub/gen/atwg/index.html> includes information about an alliance of primarily Washington DC-based organizations concerned about the spread of weaponry around the world. Includes links to the organizations' pages, and information on US legislation and the Clinton arms trade policy.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute—<http://www.sipri.se/> includes text of arms trade control documents and figures on arms trade trends, 1985-94.

**surf's up, dude****best of the rest**

- DFax (publications on nonproliferation, arms transfers, and peacekeeping)—<http://csf.colorado.edu/dfax/>
- Disarmament Links—<http://www.igc.apc.org/disarm/>
- Economic Conversion Information Exchange (US Commerce Department/Department of Defense)—[gopher://ecix.doc.gov](http://gopher://ecix.doc.gov)
- International Institute for Strategic Studies—<http://www.fsk.ethz.ch/DREOK/fsk/iiss/iisshome.html>
- Jane's ONLINE—<http://www.janes.com/janes.html>
- Military Spending Working Group—<http://www.clark.net/pub/gen/mswg/>
- Infomanage International (military spending, conversion, arms transfers resources)—<http://infomanage.com/dc/>
- Monday Lobby Group—<http://www.clark.net/pub/gen/mlg/>
- Monterey Institute, Center for Nonproliferation Studies—<http://www.miis.edu/cns.html>
- Peacenet—<http://www.peacenet.apc.org/peacenet/>
- United Nations—<http://www.un.org/>

This **mind•full** was written by Susannah L. Dyer and Sandra J. Ionno. Susannah is Analyst at the British American Security Information Council and Sandy is Executive Director of Student Pugwash USA.

## board of directors

Nicholas Steneck, Chair  
Ruth Adams  
David Andersen  
Michael Berger  
Taft Broome  
Richard Bryant  
Anne Cahn  
Peter Carpenter  
Mohamed El-Ashry  
Paul Jellinek  
Rajesh Krishnan  
Alan McGowan  
Ann Moore  
Bob Murching  
Indira Nair  
Connie Pechura

## board of advisors

Sissela Bok  
Honorable George Brown  
Audna England  
Richard Graham  
Hal Harvey  
John Holdren  
Walter Kohn  
Sally Lilienthal  
Shirley Malcom  
Richard Nelson  
Victor Rabinowitch  
Robert Rosensweig  
Frank von Hippel  
Victor Weisskopf  
Herbert York

## but wait, there's more!

- **mind•full: a brainsnack for future leaders with ethical appetites.** Upcoming issues in spring 1996 will address: the future of nuclear weapons, water quality and availability, alternative energy sources, emerging infectious diseases, access and the Internet, and public participation in scientific decision making.
- **Jobs You Can Live With: Working at the Crossroads of Science, Technology, and Society.** The fifth edition of the Student Pugwash USA internship directory. It highlights approximately 300 organizations that work to promote the ethical use of science and technology and provides suggestions on how to go about the internship and job search (available spring 1996).
- **The Global Issues Guidebook.** A 600 page student-authored discussion and classroom resource on science, technology, and society issues.
- **Pugwatch.** The chapter newsletter.
- **Chapter Organizing Guide.** Provides chapter members with an A to Z guide to getting a campus-based chapter up and running.
- **Tough Questions.** Student Pugwash USA's newsletter.

## supporters

Apple Computers, Inc.  
Carpenter Family Trust  
Ciba Educational Foundation  
Ciba Limited  
Department of Energy (US)  
Cyrus Eaton Foundation  
W. Alton Jones Foundation  
Henry P. Kendall Foundation  
Jeffrey Leifer (founder)  
John D. and Catherine T.  
MacArthur Foundation  
Stewart R. Mott Charitable Trust  
National Science Foundation  
New-Land Foundation  
Ploughshares Fund  
Rockefeller Family Associates  
Samuel Rubin Foundation  
United States Institute of Peace  
University of Wisconsin  
World Bank  
Individual Contributors

STUDENT



PUGWASH  
U S A

**student pugwash usa**  
**815 15th street, nw, suite 814**  
**washington, dc, 20005 usa**

address correction requested

## how to find us

telephone: 202-393-6555 or 1-800-wow-a-pug • fax: 202-393-6550  
e-mail: [spusa@spusa.org](mailto:spusa@spusa.org) • Web: <http://www.spusa.org/pugwash/>