Regional Arms Trade

U.S./Americas (with lots of Asia-related content)

Report on India MMRCA contest backs US bids
Carnegie Endowment releases report on India’s Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft acquisition competition, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the six aircraft under consideration: Boeing’s F/A-18E/F, Lockheed Martin’s F-16IN, RSK-MiG’s MiG-35, Dassault Aviation’s Rafale, Eurofighter Consortium’s Typhoon, and Saab’s Gripen NG. The report, authored by Ashley J. Tellis, recommends the U.S. bids on account of their lower prices, maturity of design, and advanced electronics. Tellis notes that all aircraft under consideration are fourth-generation models that will be superseded in capabilities by newer fifth-generation designs still in relative infancy. His recommendation concludes that developing a strategic relationship with the United States will open up opportunities for the future purchase of the F-35, a possibility that was not ruled out by the Pentagon undersecretary for acquisitions, technology, and logistics, Ashton B. Carter, speaking at the press conference introducing the Tellis report.

Possibility of further arms sales to Taiwan downplayed by U.S.
U.S. remains tight-lipped on future arms sales to Taiwan after month of speculation. The Washington Times reported in January that a further round of sales was on the table, including new F-16C/D aircraft that have been the subject of a decade of negotiations. Despite further entreaties from Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou to complete the long-delayed deal, the U.S. maintains that it is still waiting for the “right time”.
http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/25/us-taiwan-china-idUSTRE70O1GN20110125

Chinese aviation firm to make U.S. military tender competition bid
Chinese state-owned corporation Aviation Industry Corporation of China has partnered with a small California-based arms manufacturer, US Aero-space, to table a bid for the US Navy VXX helicopter
program and the US Air Force T-X advanced jet trainer project. The Navy program could include providing helicopters for the Marine One presidential transportation fleet.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704775604576119811508921144.html

**Mexican drug gangs obtaining arms from Romania via the United States**

Romanian AK-47s brought into the United States are now finding their way into the hands of Mexican drug gangs as reported by the Center for Public Integrity. In order to circumvent strict gun laws U.S. resellers buy stripped down models from Romanian arms manufacturers, then replace parts so as to restore their full functionality. Rising seizures of these AK-47s are conjectured to be a function of the ease with which gangs can cross the border to Texas and purchase these weapons.

http://www.publicintegrity.org/articles/entry/2857

**Brazil to seek fifth-generation aircraft from Moscow according to Russian media**

RIA Novosti further stirs rumor that Russia will offer Brazil access to the T-50, its first planned fifth-generation combat airplane. After the inauguration of new Brazilian president, Dilma Rousseff, Brazil has wiped clean the results of two previous tendering competitions and plans to host a third in search of a contract to renew its aging air force.

http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20110128/162357069.html

**Middle East**

**Middle East unrest has potential to affect U.S. arms sales proposals**

2010’s record U.S. arms sales proposals could now be in jeopardy after the recent uprisings in the Middle East. Both buyers and sellers are reconsidering potential deals according to Reuters and Politico. The U.S. might call off a sale if it doubts the wisdom of arming a regime it now finds unpalatable, while Arab governments could reassess the need for missiles and helicopters in the face of low-tech demonstrations.

http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/02/us-egypt-usa-weapons-idUSTRE7115D320110202?pageNumber=1

**Nervousness about sales to Egypt spread, France and Germany stop exports**

France and Germany have both announced halts in arms exports to Egypt in the wake of the recent large-scale demonstrations. Previous exports include tear gas, machine guns, munitions transport vehicles, and communications equipment.


**Chinese arms and parts still falling into hands of insurgents, according to Wikileaks document**

The Telegraph reports on Wikileaks documents showing US frustration with China over continued exports of conventional arms and dual-use technology to Iran. Chinese weapons have found their way into the arsenals of fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Europe**

**Serbian arms industry back on growth track, expands customer base**
After a decade of peace in the Balkans, the Serbian arms industry is experiencing a revival. Although small by international standards, Serbian exports of military and defense goods have risen from $75 million in 2007 to $246 million in 2009. Customers include Iraq, the United States, Afghanistan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, Cyprus, Cameroon, Indonesia, Jordan, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.


**EU arms exports from 2009 rise**
Newly released figures for 2009 show rising EU arms exports. The official figures released by the European Council show 40 billion euros worth of sales for the period covered. France was the largest exporter, with total value of licenses equivalent to 12.7 billion euros.

[http://uk.oneworld.net/article/view/166736/1/5795](http://uk.oneworld.net/article/view/166736/1/5795)

**Africa**

**N. Korea implicated in Burundi arms shipment scandal**
Burundi government watchdog cites corruption in illegal purchase of defective North Korean arms. North Korea has been subject to an arms export embargo imposed by the United Nations Security Council since June 2009. The audit report implicates a former Burundi Defense Minister, the current Army Chief, and the latter’s deputy, all of whom had a hand in the transaction which was arranged by a Ukrainian firm. The arms transfer under consideration involved machine guns that were originally produced by China, but no certificates of origin were included in the transfer documentation.


**SIPRI report illustrates failings of South African arms industry and export policy**
SIPRI publishes a short report on the South African arms industry and its exports in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report notes the economic motives behind export policy and the failings of the Pretoria government in preventing sales to governments suspected of human rights abuses. It also, however, illustrates the relative limits of South Africa’s export clout within its region.


**Mugabe regime accused of shipping arms to Laurent Gbagbo**
Zimbabwe provided a shipment of arms to the government of the beleaguered Laurent Gbagbo of the Ivory Coast, according to the Times of London and AllAfrica. Gbagbo lost a reelection bid in November of last year but has refused to step down to make way for Alassane Outtara, the internationally recognized victor at the ballot box.


**Global**

**Small Arms, Big Problems: The Fallout of the Global Gun Trade**
Foreign Affairs article examines the origins and travels of the weapons commonly encountered by U.S. and allied troops in Afghanistan. The relics of a century of warfare now pose more danger to security in the country than the advanced weapons systems the Bush administration identified as potential threats before the 2001 invasion. C.J. Chivers is the author of the *New York Times* blog series on the same topic, and this new article presents a summarization of his reports to date.

http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67043/c-j-chivers/small-arms-big-problems

(Note: subscription article)

*Export Control Reform*

**Geithner and Clinton argue for loosening export controls in exchange for Chinese market reform, says Lichtenbaum**

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton have made the case for relaxing export controls on advanced technology in exchange for Chinese economic policy shifts. This represents a new front in President Obama’s efforts to overhaul U.S. export control policy in a bid to promote exports and to streamline sales to preferred customers. Writing in Defense News, Peter Lichtenbaum argues that the new administration initiative is likely to cause harm to U.S. national security and that the two issues of economics and security should be decoupled. Published in February 7 print edition of Defense News. Available online with subscription as ‘A Faulty Connection: U.S. Policy Links National Security, Market Access’.

*Landmines and Cluster Munitions*

**State Department draws attention to three U.S.-funded landmine clearing initiatives**

A State Department blog applauds the work of its partners in Croatia, Sudan, and Central America on removing landmines and introducing social programs to rehabilitate victims. The three posts claim that US funding and aid have been important drivers for landmine removal programs, but also praises the work of independent humanitarian organizations such as Roots of Peace and the Mines Advisory Group.

http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/site/entry/croatia_landmines
http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/site/entry/weapons_destruction_programs_sudan
http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/site/entry/central_america_landmine_free

**Ghana becomes 51st state to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

On February 3, Ghana became the 14th African country to ratify the CCM. The country claims it has never used, stockpiled, or produced cluster munitions and was a participating negotiator during the Oslo process.

http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/news/?id=2844

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