



Fuelling the Flames:

Brokers and Transport Agents in the Illicit Arms Trade

Introduction

Arms brokers occupied a prominent place in 20th century military commerce (Silverstein, 2000b, pp. 53-55). Although the legal trade in military goods has, for the most part, been the mainstay of arms brokers, post-Cold War developments have increased the demand for their expertise in the illicit global arms trade markets as well.

Today brokers and their associated networks of intermediaries and sub-contractors are increasingly involved in the transfer of new and surplus weaponry into contemporary conflict zones. Most of these transfers have dubious legitimacy, contravening national and/or international law and occurring in the grey and black markets of the global arms trade.

The cloak of secrecy surrounding most illicit weapons transfers results in a paucity of easily accessible public information on the scope, nature, and magnitude of both the grey and black arms markets (ILLICIT TRANSFERS).

In recent years, the important role that arms brokers and their intermediaries play in the illicit trade has been the subject of some in-depth studies (Wood and Peleman, 1999). All of them suggest that these 'go-betweens' are far more critical to the illicit arms trade than first meets the eye. As a result, the United Nations, various governments, researchers, and activists have begun to focus more intently on the issue of illicit arms brokering in an attempt to find ways to regulate and control the activities of these actors.¹ This chapter attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are the defining characteristics of arms brokers in today's world?
- What is the role of brokers in contemporary illicit arms transactions?
- What is the role of transport agents and their relationship with brokers?
- What national and international initiatives are underway to address the problems of illicit arms brokering?

Several important caveats must be kept in mind when studying the arms brokering profession and its overall implications for the illicit arms trade: First, it is important to recognize that arms brokering can be a perfectly legal profession. By focusing on illicit brokering, the objective is not to stigmatize legal brokers, but to understand the critical role they may play in the illicit trade in small arms. Second, the information that has emerged to date on illicit arms brokering is fragmentary and anecdotal at best, and cannot be used to arrive at general statements.

At this stage, it is impossible to know what percentage of illicit arms deals are brokered, how many brokers operate in today's world, or what the overall significance of brokering in illicit arms deals is. However, examining how brokers operate provides important insights into:

- the centrality of these actors in many illicit transactions;
- the various techniques and strategies brokers use to ply their trade and ensure that their transactions remain undetected; and
- the means by which their activities contribute to shaping and sustaining contemporary arms markets and exacerbating violent conflict.

Drawing on open-source information and investigative research, particularly in Africa, this chapter attempts to explain the phenomenon of brokering by delineating certain patterns and common features. While illicit arms brokering is not limited to Africa, its conflicts and their massive humanitarian consequences have drawn more attention from analysts and researchers than other regions of the world. Focusing on Africa should not imply that illicit arms brokering is unique to that continent; rather, that it is currently the best source of information on the issue. Other regions of the world will be the subject of research in subsequent editions of the Small Arms Survey .

This chapter is divided into three main sections:

Section 1 defines illicit arms brokering and discusses the diverse activities that brokers undertake on behalf of parties to a weapons deal. By exploring brokers' strategies and techniques, it illustrates how existing arms control laws and regulations can be circumvented and exploited. Moreover, examining the world of bartering or commodity concessions and private military companies reveals how arms brokers operate at the interface of various networks that, together, sustain and shape many contemporary conflicts.

Section 2 focuses specifically on the way brokers arrange for weapons transports. It explains how, at least in the air cargo industry, brokers contract dedicated transport agents to arrange the physical transfer of weapons cargoes to destinations throughout the world. In so doing, they draw on large networks of specialized support personnel to minimize detection. Case studies, particularly in Africa, provide vital insights into the various actors and services involved in the structure, logistics, and functioning of transport networks, and the way several large networks fuel current conflicts in many parts of the world.

Section 3 reviews a number of national arms control systems (i.e. the body of laws and regulations that govern the import, export, and transit of military and paramilitary goods) and highlights how, in many countries, the issue of brokering is inadequately addressed in national legislation. It also provides a brief survey of current international initiatives in the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations that are attempting to regulate and control illicit brokering. Future editions of the Survey will undertake a more in-depth review of national arms control systems to identify inadequacies with regard to brokering activities, including the lack of enforcement and monitoring capacity.

Arms brokering in the post-Cold War era

Simply by picking up a telephone, an arms broker in a western European city can negotiate an arms deal, procure large quantities of weapons from one country, arrange for their transportation to a country on another continent, and organize payments through front companies and secret bank accounts in offshore finance or 'tax havens'. Given the right contacts and a good knowledge of the market, a single individual can—without ever physically taking possession of the weapons—bring together suppliers and recipients who would otherwise have remained separated by the dictates of legality and geographical distance.

Although small arms and their associated ammunition represent only about five per cent of the total value of global arms exports (LEGAL TRANSFERS), more than 80 per cent of contemporary conflicts are fought with them. Thus, it has been observed that brokers operating in this area play a potentially more pernicious role than middlemen organizing conventional weapons sales. By arming combatants in both intra- and inter-state conflicts, their destabilizing role in geopolitical affairs assumes a far greater magnitude than their small numbers might suggest (Silverstein, 2000). Moreover, unlike conventional weapons, there is currently no international mechanism (e.g. UN Register of Conventional Arms) to monitor the production, stockpiling, and/or transfer of small

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arms. Finally, the secrecy that is the trademark of this business plays right into the hands of brokers operating in the 'grey' and 'black' sectors of the illicit small arms market.

Several factors underlie the prominence of brokers in contemporary illicit arms transfers:

- **Changing demand patterns:** It appears that governments may be increasingly outsourcing the organization of covert arms transfers to private actors, as opposed to relying on security agencies and payrolled companies (Silverstein, 2000b). This is primarily to conceal the chain of accountability, to avoid potentially damaging public scrutiny, and/or to overcome their lack of expertise or capacity to obtain arms on the global market (Silverstein, 2000b, p. 59).

Moreover, most contemporary conflicts tend to be internal, involving a multitude of state and non-state actors. According to SIPRI, of the 27 major conflicts in 25 countries in 1999, the vast majority were intra-state wars in Africa and Asia (SIPRI, 2000). These conflicts have generated increased demand for weapons, particularly small arms. This, in turn, has created a market for brokers whose clients dominate today's warfare 'market'—illegitimate or repressive government forces, rebels, militias, and ethnic, religious, or guerrilla groups—who usually cannot afford expensive conventional arms. Compounding this situation is the spillover of many intra-state conflicts into surrounding countries (e.g. the spillover of the Rwandan and Burundian conflicts into the Democratic Republic of Congo). A final significant factor behind changing demand is the increasingly transnational scope of organized crime (e.g. drug trafficking, terrorist activities), sometimes even abetted by persons in official positions. This situation has created ample opportunities for brokers, notably in states with little centralized authority.²

- **Changing supply-side factors:** Since the end of the Cold War, the ready availability of massive surplus arms stocks from the West and the former Soviet bloc, together with new production, has created a flourishing 'buyer's market' (PRODUCERS). Likewise, it has increased brokers' opportunities to clinch deals at advantageous prices for actors involved in conflicts (BICC, 1997, pp. 142-173; Wood and Peleman, 2000). At the same time, Western governments have started downsizing their military operations and infrastructures now that there is no longer the pressing need to counteract the Warsaw Pact's conventional arms capabilities.



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Box 3.1 A time of plenty for illicit arms suppliers

Today brokers enjoy considerably greater access to supplies of new and surplus weapons than during the Cold War era. As countries downsize their defence sectors,³ massive arms surpluses are 'dumped' onto the markets, usually at bargain basement prices. In many cases, these weapons end up in conflict zones. For example, it has been reported that Russian officials sold rebels in Tajikistan massive amounts of arms from Soviet stockpiles between 1992-97 (Pirsevedi, 2000, pp. 46-48).

In Eastern Europe, the collapse of the communist bloc and the deterioration of state control over various sectors of the economy have undermined the power to regulate the behaviour of the private arms industry and the movement of military goods. As a result, many of these companies are now free to supply the highest bidder (Laurance, 1998). The most conspicuous pattern that has emerged in the 1990s involves West European-based arms brokers obtaining supplies from cheap stocks, primarily in Eastern Europe, and delivering them, primarily by air, to warring state and non-state forces in poorer countries (Wood and Peleman, 1999).

Much of this offloading of small arms has been prompted by a combination of factory over-production, poorly managed stockpiles, inadequate export controls, and corruption. Finally, brokers and their intermediaries also obtain weapons directly out of conflict situations. In regions plagued with endemic warfare, brokers often transfer military leftovers from one conflict to another (BICC, 1997, p.150).

As a result, many former employees of security agencies and defence forces have sought work in the private sector, either as arms brokers, dealers, or ‘security service’ providers. They have brought their insider contacts, technical expertise, and know-how inherited from the covert Cold War arms markets with them to this new calling.

- **Arms and the opportunities of globalization:** The forces of globalization, catalyzed by advances in communications and information technology, are creating unprecedented opportunities and altogether new forms of economic activity. In this interlinked world, the privatization of many defence industries and the rapid growth of transnational business, finance, and transport networks have facilitated the ability of brokers to match weapon supplies with demand, allowing them to surmount geographic and legal barriers. As in other areas of cross-border commerce, international co-operation to regulate the transnational movement of military goods has yet to catch up with the realities of the globalized economy. Consequently, brokers exploit loopholes in national legislation and international law, taking advantage of areas in which regulatory capacity is either lacking or inadequate.

Contemporary arms brokering: Actors and services

The secrecy surrounding illicit arms transfers often makes it difficult to identify the actors involved and the services they provide. In any business relationship, potential parties to a deal must first establish contact, negotiate a contract, arrange financing and payment, and carry out the deal. In the arms business—as in most other businesses—specialized agents provide a crucial supporting role. This is where the brokers come in.

Identifying who is, in fact, the ‘broker’ in a given arms transaction and outlining the scope and nature of his activities is not a simple task. Arms transactions involve a fluid constellation of actors whose roles, activities, and identities overlap and shift in form over time, and whose degree of influence varies widely. Drawing overly rigid distinctions between ‘dealers’, ‘brokers’, or ‘transport agents’ could prove counter-productive.

The important distinction to make—and the basis on which to identify an actor as either a dealer or broker—is the extent to which one set of activities is emphasized over the other. A dealer is an actor who primarily purchases weapons for subsequent resale; a broker is an actor who primarily works to facilitate weapons transactions. In the world of illicit trafficking, it is arguably brokering, and not dealing, activities that play the most critical role in ensuring a timely and usually cheap flow of weapons to embargoed states, insurgent groups, and other actors.

Defining brokers: The definition of brokering used in this chapter is based on the essence of arms brokering—the facilitation and organization of transactions on a relatively autonomous basis, and for some form of compensation or material reward (e.g. financial commission on the deal).⁴

On this basis, several characteristics of brokering can be identified from actual practice:

- **Invisibility:** Considering the transient, intangible, and invisible nature of facilitating and arranging deals, brokers often do not even see, much less take concrete possession of, the weapons they procure. As a result, they cannot easily be held legally accountable under contractual arrangements based on the notion of ownership.
- **Autonomy:** Most brokers act independently as middlemen, which is what the term ‘broker’ implies. By bringing together buyers and sellers, they could, in principle, be said to bear equal responsibility for the arms transactions they facilitate. Because parties to an illicit weapons deal rarely take recourse to contract litigation, brokers often serve as arbitrators or neutral third-party witnesses to minimize violations of the deal.
- **Expertise:** Brokers are a source of sophisticated expertise for arms suppliers and buyers who might not otherwise know how to negotiate the dark corridors of illicit market deals. They

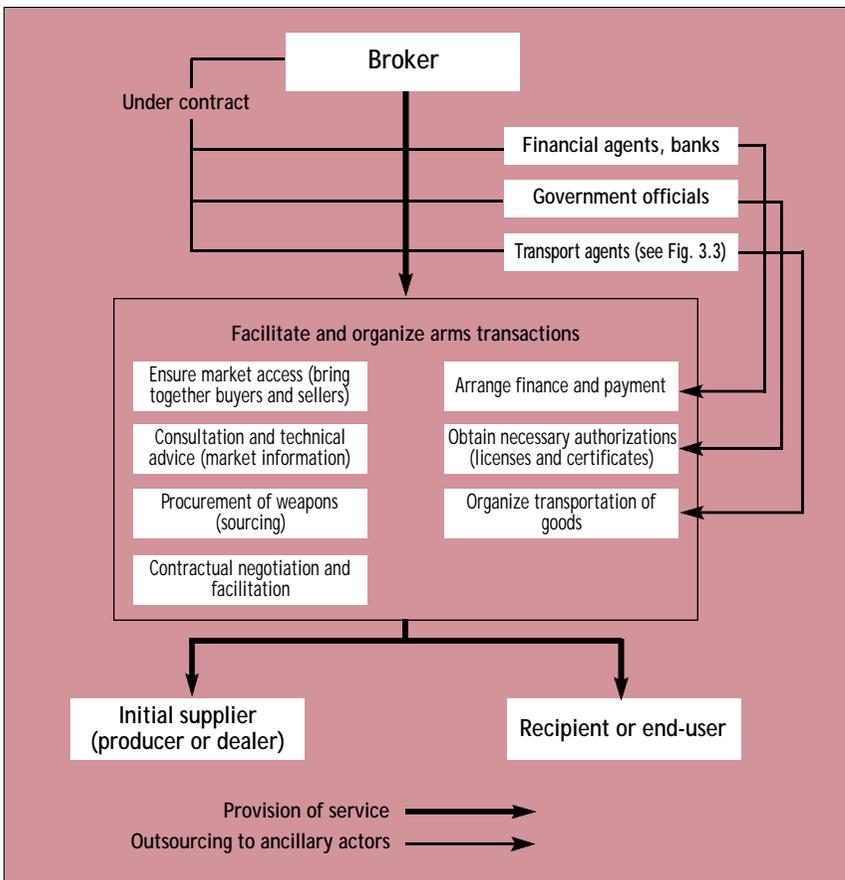
Arms broker: an individual who facilitates and organizes arms transactions on behalf of suppliers and recipients for some form of compensation or financial reward.

often possess considerable technical and marketing know-how, keep themselves current on the easiest and most reliable transport routes and financial modalities, and utilize a large network of contacts, collaborators, and experts 'in the business'. The 'bigtime brokers' are not infrequently key players in broader networks involving foreign military interventions and economic activities.

- **Management:** Superior management skills are practically a prerequisite in this 'profession'. Since brokers are usually the ones responsible for setting up and maintaining the structure of arms transactions, they play a vital role in maintaining the complex network of intermediaries and sub-contractors that comprise any given transaction. In addition, brokers' abilities to secure the expertise of financial and transport agents and to ensure the timely flow of goods, documents, and payments illustrates their managerial skills in providing knowledge and know-how at the same time they are running covert, continent-spanning, military-style operations.

'The broker's world' (see Figure 3.1) shows in schematic form the nature of arms brokering activities: the broker's relationship to other parties in a given transaction (i.e. the producer or initial supplier, and the recipient or end-user); and the links between brokers and other intermediaries (e.g. dealers, financial agents, government officials, and transport agents). In organizing and facilitating arms transactions, brokers provide the following series of services (see Fig. 3.1):

Figure 3.1 The broker's world



1. **Prospecting:** At the outset, brokers prospect for clients, investigating or responding to demand in different parts of the world and identifying willing suppliers. Their value-added lies in their ability to bring buyers and sellers together and ensure market access.
2. **Offering technical advice:** Having established relations between potential suppliers and end-users, brokers offer important consultative and technical advice on the 'nuts and bolts' of the deal. This includes advice on appropriate weapons systems, possible modalities for transport and financing, appropriate contacts, and strategies for the overall transaction.
3. **Sourcing:** Once the contours of a deal begin to emerge, brokers identify the desired type and quantity of weaponry, and obtain information on pricing, payment schemes, and so forth.
4. **Mediating negotiations:** Subsequently, brokers play a key mediating role in the contractual negotiations, in planning and facilitating communication between the parties, and in acting as a buffer to conceal evidence of their interaction.
5. **Financing:** Once a deal has been struck, brokers are instrumental in arranging financing and payment of arms transactions, and securing appropriate lines of credit.
6. **Obtaining authorizations:** In addition, brokers often arrange for official documentation authorizing the transaction, either through legal or illicit channels, and often with the assistance of conniving government officials.
7. **Organizing transports:** At the same time, they also organize the transport of the ordered goods—either by air, sea, or overland cargo—and take steps to ensure that it reaches its final destination.

In return for their services, brokers receive some form of compensation that ranges from a 'cut' or financial commission from the arms sale, or even payment 'in-kind', usually in the form of highly lucrative commodities, such as oil or diamonds.⁵

Because arms transactions vary greatly in magnitude and complexity, individual brokers rarely perform these services alone. Sometimes, they work in partnership on a deal, co-ordinating complementary roles and activities, while other brokers backstop activities undertaken directly by the parties to a transaction (Peleman, 2000a).⁶ Where weapons are first acquired by arms dealers, brokers can be contracted to seek out willing buyers or, conversely, to contract dealers, as in Africa where arms have been purchased by mining companies on behalf of non-state actors at the behest of their brokers, in return for promises of a share of future mineral profits (Berman, 2000).

Sometimes brokers themselves act as dealers, acquiring stocks of arms on the basis of perceived demand which they then broker to interested parties. Geda Mezosy, a Hungarian broker, obtained and later purchased weapons using a network of couriers in the hope that he would be able to re-sell them to prospective clients. The weapons were supplied by Croatian militias exploiting surplus stocks from the Bosnia and Herzegovina war. Mezosy's illegal operations were discovered by the Belgian authorities in May 1996 (Peleman, 2000a).⁷

The broker scene: The world of contemporary brokering revolves around a rather small, select group—a sort of insider brokering elite. Within this circle, brokers can be divided into two groups according to their professional and personal backgrounds, and the experience they bring to illicit arms trafficking.

- **The Cold War brokers:** This first group is actually already somewhat a relic of the past, comprising brokers who became rich and famous by facilitating large-scale arms transfers for one or more governments during the Cold War.⁸ For these individuals, who specialize in large, multi-million dollar contracts for major conventional weapons systems, the post-Cold War era offers business as usual, plus the added opportunities of globalization. Driven primarily by profit, and now liberated from the ideological dictates of the Cold War, these high-profile players maintain long-standing relationships to state procurement networks and sources. More importantly, they retain and assiduously cultivate the trust and confidence of government officials at the highest levels.

Investing their cumulative profits in lucrative businesses associated with their principal occupation (e.g. oil or mineral concessions, transport, and financing enterprises), this calibre of brokering tends to become an institution in its own right with vast numbers of employees and contacts. Notable members of this elite group include: Monzer Al-Kassar who built his career during the Cold War, thanks to his connections with intelligence services on both sides of the Iron Curtain;⁹ Sarkis Soghanalian, a long-time CIA agent who counted France and China among his clients (Public Education Center, 1998, p. 2); and Adnan Kashoggi, a former Lockheed agent and key player in the Iran-Contra Affair (Wood and Peleman, 1999, p.8).

- The ‘newcomers’: The second group of brokers includes former mid-level government officials and personnel from agencies or national security armed forces. Entering the private sector more recently, and usually as smaller-scale operators, these individuals often use their prior experience, government contacts, or military careers as springboards to launch private brokering practices. Many of them operate in or near conflict zones, in offshore banking or ‘tax havens’, or in supply centres, such as Eastern Europe where they combine their expertise with access to already glutted weapons markets. While, in the past, only brokers with ample financial and political assets could deal in markets involving such high-powered deals as million dollar credits, current demands—from rebel armies, gangs, or even corrupt governments—have created a new ‘climate’ where these smaller brokers can slip into the market mainstream.¹⁰

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Overall, in contrast to the popular stereotype of the lone gun runner, arms brokering is increasingly becoming a networking activity, intertwined with the provision of private military services, drug trafficking, money laundering, organized crime, and the trade in commodities (e.g. oil, timber, and ‘conflict diamonds’).

Brokering strategies and techniques: The ‘rules of the game’

Illicit arms transactions are scarcely a new phenomenon. The nature of contemporary conflicts, involving both internal actors and foreign intervenors (including individuals and corporations), has created a new dynamic that has expanded the weapons market far beyond the regulatory frameworks of existing national and international arms controls. In order to conceal arms transfers from unauthorized parties, circumvent geographical barriers, and ensure that complex logistical and human resource requirements are met, illegally operating brokers employ a wide variety of strategies and techniques.

Operating in the shadow of the ‘grey weapons market’: In order to maximize opportunities and earnings, some brokers prefer to operate in the opaque and fitfully controlled grey and black areas of the illicit arms market. Here the legal status of transactions is ambiguous at best and deliveries are carried out on a covert basis (ILLICIT TRANSFERS). In pursuing this path, brokers hope to avoid, not only the watchful eye and punitive force of national or international law, but also the visibility that accompanies such brazen flouting of the laws that is characteristic of black marketeers.

Grey market transactions are less brazen. They are commonly understood to encompass only those small arms transfers that are legally endorsed or not regulated or those that take place covertly, with either the tacit or explicit support of governments. Covert (secret) transactions may be either legal or illicit, depending on whether they have violated the sanctioning state’s laws or it can be foreseen that the arms will be transferred to forces using them for serious violations of international law.¹¹ Either way, organizing arms transfers beyond the pale of the law—yet not in open violation of it—is a form of expertise that only the most astute brokers possess. They can bring this to the negotiating table in at least two ways.

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- First, many brokers depend on either the active or passive complicity of governments and officials to obtain the necessary authorizations for a given arms transaction, regardless of its legal status.

A recurrent motive for the alleged involvement of government officials in illicit small arms transfers is—pure and simply—profit.

The most obvious government involvement occurs when some countries try to conceal their weapons purchases to keep them out of public expenditure budgets that are monitored by donor countries or multilateral organizations. Moreover, while most arms-producing countries do not supply military specification weapons to rebel movements, others might. Acting through brokers can disguise the true nature of the relationship between the supplier and the recipient.¹² Another motive for the alleged involvement of government officials in illicit small arms transfers is—pure and simply—profit. Thus, some will allow weapons to traverse their territories, or even provide the necessary end-user certification, in exchange for a cut of the deal's value or some other payback. As a result, these brokers move arms through state-authorized channels placed at their disposition. This serves as a near perfect camouflage for illicit transactions.

Box 3.2 Breaking an international arms embargo: Argentina, Croatia, and the role of Diego Palleros

Between 1991 and 1995, Diego Palleros, a retired Argentine Army colonel, allegedly arranged, together with several high-ranking Argentinian government officials, a shipment of 6,500 tons of Argentinean small arms, light weapons, and ammunition to Croatia—breaking an international arms embargo in the process (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 23 March 1999).

The scandal tainted the image of the Menem Government just at a time when the administration was presenting Argentina as a reformed country that respected international law. As a result, a minister and several high-ranking officials resigned, and at least three key witnesses in the case died prematurely during the investigations. The broker himself went into hiding in South Africa (*Latin America Weekly Report*, 1 September 1998). The weapons shipment, included 20,000 9mm pistols ordered for Panama's 'police and security forces'—but it never reached Panamanian soil. Instead the weapons were shipped to Croatia. Palleros reportedly said that President Carlos Menem and other high-ranking members of his government had known all along about the arms sales (*Latin America Weekly Report*, 1 September 1998).

The way Palleros had organized the transaction illustrates the key role brokers play in bringing suppliers and recipients together. Having been informed by a relative in South Africa about a possible deal in Croatia, Palleros allegedly consulted with the management of Argentina's major weapons producer, the Dirección General de Fabricaciones Militares (DGFM), which gave the green light for the deal (Santoro, 1998, pp.133-134). In order to avoid any embarrassment to the Government, Palleros bought Debrol International Trade in Uruguay, a fake company with no offices or telephones. He then obtained an end-user certificate from Panama, for which he allegedly paid US\$ 50-80,000 (Santoro, 1998, p.136).

This end-user certificate originally stated that the weapons were destined for the Panamanian National Guard, despite the fact that this agency no longer existed. Palleros wrote to the Argentine weapons producer, informing him that the end-user certificate would be sent from Panama to Buenos Aires by courier and that payments were to be made through the Deutsche Bank (Santoro, 1998, p.137). At the last minute, however, the Panamanian in charge of preparing the document decided to increase the price. Because Croatia was in a rush to receive the weapons, the Argentine Government reportedly issued a decree on 27 August 1991, approving the sales without documentation. A last minute end-user certificate was produced by Palleros with the official stamp and signature of an official at the Panamanian Embassy in Buenos Aires. The Panamanian official later claimed in court that his signature had been forged (Santoro 1998, pp.138-141).

The UN Security Council had approved an embargo on weapons sales to any of the former Yugoslav republics on 25 September 1991, five days after the first shipment of arms from Argentina arrived in Croatia. Despite the embargo, Argentinian shipments continued, even after 800 Argentine soldiers had joined the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in parts of former Yugoslavia (Santoro, 1998, pp.147-162).

Box 3.3 Edwin Wilson: Arming Qadhafi, CIA style

During his time with the CIA, Edwin Wilson, who left the Agency in 1976, made large sums of money setting up front companies for a top secret Navy intelligence unit. With his insider contacts, Wilson was able to broker weapons and mercenaries for military dictators and shady regimes, including Augusto Pinochet's secret service, DINA, and the regime of Muammar Qadhafi in Libya.¹³ Living in a seaside villa in the Libyan capital of Tripoli, Wilson became Qadhafi's private broker, enlisting former CIA agents and firms he had used as covers in his CIA heyday to run a multi-million dollar operation for the Libyan dictator.

Forged US State Department export certificates and international shipping documents were used to ship arms and explosives to Libya. When Qadhafi placed an order for hundreds of thousands of timer devices and detonators, Wilson and his associates had no trouble finding them through traditional CIA contractors in the US. Several companies, although selling the devices at highly inflated prices, reportedly thought Wilson's orders were part of an authorized CIA operation (Goulden, 1984, p. 460; *International Herald Tribune*, 18 June 1981).

A first investigation by the US Justice Department, begun in 1977, was dropped later that year when it was concluded that, despite the 'nefarious business activities' of these former CIA-agents, no US laws had been violated (*International Herald Tribune*, 25 June 1981). At that time, Wilson and a host of US companies had been shipping weaponry and explosives via Europe to Libya and had been recruiting various experts for operations and training in that country.

Four years later, when Wilson was finally arrested, the US Internal Revenue Service demanded US\$ 21 million in back taxes and penalties from the estimated US\$ 50 million he was thought to have made between 1977-81. In 1980 alone, tax court files showed that Wilson's dealings with Libya had generated a gross income of US\$ 22.9 million dollars. More than half of this revenue reportedly came from a contract to supply rifles, small arms, and ammunition to the Libyan Armed Forces (*International Herald Tribune*, 30 July 1983).

Source: Peleman, 2000



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Depending on the degree of leverage they exert, brokers can also bring about states' 'passive' involvement in their activities, usually through a policy of non-interference, or acts of omission. Some brokers with powerful political clout, like Kashoggi, are virtually 'untouchable' insofar as their relationships and dealings involving government officials at the highest echelons go. Any persecution of these brokers, or denunciation of their activities as illicit, could result in the incrimination of states, or the exposure of embarrassing covert activities by the governments themselves.

Sarkis Soghanalian, a former CIA employee who represented the French and Chinese governments (Public Education Center, 1998, p. 2), was allegedly involved in the arming of the Christian militias in Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s and the Argentine military junta during the Falklands war (Peleman, 2000a). Arrested in 1991, he was convicted in the United States of conspiring to circumvent federal requirements to set up a US\$ 100 million arms deal, supplying South African arms to Iraq in 1983, using Austria as a transit country. After serving two years in prison, he assisted US authorities in cracking a counterfeit ring in Lebanon. He was released and became a registered arms dealer in France, with offices in Paris and the Middle East. According to a defence correspondent based in Africa, Soghanalian has been linked in recent years to procurement and military assistance services on that continent, including to the warring parties in Congo-Brazzaville (*International Defence Review*, 1 August 1998).

- The second technique brokers use to operate beyond the pale of the law involves exploiting loopholes and inadequacies in national and international arms control regulations. At present, many national arms control systems do not adequately address the activities of brokers and affiliated transport and financial agents. Because they cannot be prosecuted for the 'intangible' services

Box 3.4 Arms trafficking, offshore banking, and 'tax havens'

Strong client confidentiality for money transactions, lax regulatory systems, poor licensing procedures, inadequate enforcement capacity for customs controls, and the lack of income tax are some of the main characteristics of the so-called financial offshore 'tax havens'. Not surprisingly, they are often used by unscrupulous arms brokers, transport agents, and cargo charter companies as a convenient money laundering and tax evasion site. By constantly registering and closing down front companies, arms traffickers can evade accountability for their actions.

A freelance pilot who lived in the UK's Channel Islands reflected on his involvement in the delivery of arms to the exiled Rwandan forces and militia in April 1994: '*... as far as I understand it, the banking laws in this country make it an ideal place for the trade to actually take place without anything physically happening ... The brokerage of these flights, the provision of aircraft for them, and the financial facilitation for them, tends to take place in the UK, but the flights themselves do not originate within the UK or, for that matter, operate through the UK.*'¹⁴

A 1998 UK Government Home Office report found that an estimated 90,000 companies were incorporated in UK offshore 'tax havens', most of them by non-residents (Edwards, 1998). In these places, business can be conducted in relative secrecy without filing public accounts, annual reports, or publicly registering the names of their beneficiaries.

Several air cargo companies operating in conflict regions and contracted by brokers for illicit arms transactions have aircraft registered in 'tax havens'. These include:

- **Air Transport Office (ATO)**, implicated in transporting weapons to UNITA from Kinshasa, which has aircraft registered in the Bahamas;
- **Ibis Air International**, a group allegedly registered in the Bahamas with offices in Guernsey and Malta, and which has planes registered in Equatorial Guinea, that has flown cargo on behalf of Sandline and Executive Outcomes (Wood, 2000);
- **Jet-Lease International**, the transport agent used by Mil-Tec Corporation, Ltd. to deliver arms to the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide in April, May, and July 1994. This company is reportedly registered in the Bahamas, but is run out of London (Wood, 2000).¹⁵

The UK Home Office report estimates that Channel Island companies hold around five per cent of the global offshore tax haven funds totalling some US\$ 6 trillion—equivalent to almost half the GNP of the United Kingdom.

In one 1997 deal, the money for an oil-for-arms deal to Congo-Brazzaville, brokered by a German dealer based in South Africa, was laundered through a Barclays Bank account and a front company in Jersey. The dealer also used a trading company and a Barclays account in

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Brokers often exploit discrepancies between national arms control systems.

they provide, brokers can set up illicit arms deals—as long as the physical weapons do not cross or enter the territory of the state in which they themselves reside (so-called 'third-country' brokering).¹⁷ Edwin Wilson, a former CIA agent, used his contacts and know-how to broker weapons for Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi in the 1970s (Peleman, 2000a). Because Wilson had organized his activities outside US territory, however, an investigation launched into this deal by the US Justice Department was ultimately dropped after 1977 on the grounds that no US law had been violated (see Box 3.3).

Brokers often exploit discrepancies between national arms control systems, taking advantage of inconsistent documentation requirements, and ineffective verification mechanisms. For example, states commonly require end-user certificates—a document stating the destination of the weapons shipments, which, additionally, serves as the buyer's pledge that weapons will not be re-exported to third parties. As fool-proof as this sounds, brokers do not appear to have much difficulty obtaining or forging them. Sometimes genuine certificates are obtained and used to procure arms that are subsequently diverted to other destinations with the issuing government's approval.

London.¹⁶ The arms were used in a civil war in which many thousands of civilians were indiscriminately killed and over 300,000 internally displaced. The bank was later accused of operating a lax screening system for large funds (Wood and Peleman, 1999; Barnett, 1999).

Suspiciously, since neither has a standing defence force, the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey were also listed by the UK Government in 1998 as the destination points in 74 standard individual export licences for small arms, and also for seven of the UK's open export licences for a variety of equipment relating to small arms, military vehicles, naval vessels, and combat aircraft. Moreover, the UK Customs and Excise export data for 1998 show no arms movements for those Islands (*UK Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls, 1997 and 1998; Report of UK Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Development and Trade Select Committees, 2000*).

Source: Wood, 2000



Figure. 3.2 Thirty-five of the world's best known financial and 'tax havens'

Andorra	The Republic of the Maldives
Anguilla – Overseas Territory of the UK	The Republic of the Marshall Islands
Antigua and Barbuda	The Principality of Monaco
Aruba – Kingdom of the Netherlands	Montserrat – Overseas Territory of the UK
Commonwealth of the Bahamas	The Republic of Nauru
Bahrain	Netherlands Antilles – Kingdom of the Netherlands
Barbados	Niue – New Zealand
Belize	Panama
British Virgin Islands - Overseas Territory of the UK	Samoa
Cook Islands – New Zealand	The Republic of the Seychelles
The Commonwealth of Dominica	St. Lucia
Gibraltar – Overseas Territory of the UK	The Federation of St. Christopher and Nevis
Grenada	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Guernsey/Sark/Alderney - Dependency of the British Crown	Tonga
Isle of Man – Dependency of the British Crown	Turks and Caicos – Overseas Territory of the UK
Jersey – Dependency of the British Crown	US Virgin Islands – External Territory of the US
Liberia	The Republic of Vanuatu
The Principality of Liechtenstein	

The relatively recent emergence of transnational business networks has also helped brokers organize transactions that span countries and continents, exploiting the laws where they are weakest. As a result, brokers can base their operations in European capitals, where they benefit from communications and business infrastructures or are close to suppliers and other service providers, while routing financial transactions through offshore 'tax havens', and using cargo companies based in or near conflict zones to effect the transport.

Brokering networks: Without brokers, the illicit weapons market would be far less accessible to buyers who, for example, may find themselves caught in the chaos of far-flung conflicts or black-listed by the international community. Without brokers, private individuals and companies seeking access to diamond and oil 'war economies' would lose their most basic bargaining chip—the steady flow of weapons. Most importantly, without brokers, the illicit arms market would lose its form and structure, being deprived of one of its most important components: the very networks that sustain and channel the interactions of all involved.

Without brokers, illicit arms transfers would also be far more difficult and risky. Their ability to use large networks of contacts and intermediaries to facilitate a given weapons deal goes far beyond

Box 3.5 Jacques Monsieur: Iranian weapons for African wars—and more

Jacques Monsieur, a former Belgian army officer, had been a privileged middleman for Iranian weapons procurement for decades. In 1987 a Brussels prosecutor started investigating Monsieur's wheeling-and-dealing after the Belgian Minister of Justice was interrogated by a parliamentary commission of inquiry into embargo-trade via Belgium. Monsieur was at that time a middleman between Iranian officials and the Belgian sales agencies of international arms merchants and producers. Despite the Belgian investigation, he continued his deals via a Belgian-registered company until 1993.¹⁸ None of the numerous criminal investigations instigated by the Brussels prosecutor ever led to any court cases, let alone convictions of Monsieur (*De Morgen*, 23 August 1999).

Following the end of the Cold War, Monsieur reportedly began using his contacts in Iran to transform his former client state into a hub for his far-flung weapons deals with other countries like Serbia, Croatia, and the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville). As documents later seized at his premises revealed, he was using Iran this time as a supplier country for deliveries.

In Africa, during the war in the Republic of Congo, Monsieur was reportedly a 'commercial consultant' to then President Pascal Lissouba. According to one source, Lissouba's rival Sassou N'Gusso (the current President) was also among his clients (*La Lettre du Continent*, 3 June 1999). Monsieur also reportedly supplied the West African country of Togo with ammunition in 1996 (*L'Express*, 24 June 1999). Despite a Belgian investigation and a brief period of detention in France, Monsieur kept operating freely, although in late 2000 he was arrested and detained, for unknown reasons, in Iran.¹⁹

Source: Peleman, 2000

the mere provision of 'consultative' services. It is what gives their 'intangible' activities such significance. This is clearly illustrated in the activities of two brokers—Edwin Wilson and Jacques Monsieur (See Boxes 3.3 and 3.5).

Transactional complexities

Arms suppliers and recipients generally try to keep their transactions secret. Brokers involved in shady deals resort to various techniques to increase the number of sub-transactions and intermediaries involved. The goal is to make it virtually impossible to trace the chain of accountability to the principal parties. There are three main techniques:

1. The first involves the proliferation of entities in a given transaction, many of which have no real or legal existence. It entails setting up numerous fronts, or holding companies, in jurisdictions with weak oversight over corporate activities and registration (see Box 3.4 and Fig. 3.2). Such companies, whose names appear on contracts, airwaybills, and other documents, conceal the actual entities involved.
2. The second technique involves disguising the 'money trail', usually through classic money laundering schemes using global financial networks (Lumpe, 2000, pp. 154-183).
3. Finally, brokers usually employ transport agents and cargo handlers who have substantial expertise in making aircraft and ships 'vanish into thin air' when delivering arms cargoes.

For example, the brokering of weapons from Israel to Colombia in the late 1980s by Yair Klein clearly illustrates how he (almost) managed to conceal this transaction by utilizing the above techniques. Arms destined for the paramilitary forces of Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, leader of the Medellín drug cartel, were reportedly purchased from Israel Military Industries (IMI) (The Jerusalem Post, 15 March 1991). To conceal the identities of the ultimate end-users, Klein's private security

Brokers involved in shady deals are experts in creating non-existent front companies, disguising money trails, and making ships and aircraft 'vanish into thin air'.

company, Spearhead, claimed it was purchasing the weapons on behalf of the Panamanian government (The Jerusalem Post , 26 April 1991).

To disguise the nature of the payment, a complex money laundering scheme was developed. Between November 1988 and February 1989, two payments—in the amounts of US\$ 98,132 and US\$ 286,250 respectively—were reportedly made from Spearhead's Panamanian account in Banco Aleman-Panemeno to Philadelphia International Bank. These payments were then said to have been transferred to Manufacturer Hanover Trust Co., and on to the Bank Hapoalim account of IMI's commissioned sales representative in Miami Beach (The Jerusalem Post , 15 March 1991). From there, they were reportedly transferred to IMI in Israel. While no definitive proof has emerged that these payments were originally first made by the Medellin cartel into Spearhead's account, a further transfer of US\$ 44,000 was reportedly made in early February 1989 to Luiz Meneses Baez, a retired Colombian army officer who mediated between the cartel and Klein, proving the existence of a Colombian connection (The Jerusalem Post , 15 March 1991). If the raid by Colombian police on the Medellin cartel headquarters on 15 December 1989 had not retrieved weapons whose serial numbers were traced to IMI, evidence of the weapons sale would never have been uncovered.

To cite another example, the Syrian Monzer Al-Kassar, a broker of Cold War fame who built a career on relations with intelligence services on both sides of the Iron Curtain, was a master of subterfuge. His claims to fame include his well-documented role as a supplier of arms to terrorist groups and a distributor of narcotics grown in Lebanon's Bekaa-valley; his role in the Iran-Contra Affair, which involved the transfer of large quantities of small arms from Polish state factories and the Portuguese company DEFEX, using a host of fake companies in Austria and Holland (Final Report of the Independent Counsel for Iran-Contra Matters , 1993); and his suspected role in having financed and supplied the explosives used to blow up the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992 (Latin America Weekly Report , 21 July 1998).²⁰

In 1995, a Swiss prosecutor accused Al-Kassar of arms trafficking to the Balkans (Bosnia). The arms, hidden in sacks of sugar, had been shipped in 1992, in violation of the UN arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia. Al-Kassar allegedly set up the deal but the operation was run by a Polish state enterprise and a private Austrian company under the cover of the Embassy of South Yemen in Paris (Peleman, 2000). The Swiss prosecutor asked the Geneva court to seize US\$ 6 million from Al-Kassar, saying that the funds had been obtained from drug trafficking and money laundering (Agence France Presse , 3 August 1995). Although Al-Kassar partially admitted the facts in court, he claimed that the weapons had been earmarked for South Yemen, a country that no longer legally existed at the time of the arms transaction.

The broader context: Globalizing the war economy

Today more than ever, brokers play a key role in the broader networks and activities that sustain and shape contemporary conflicts and, by implication, fuel the illicit arms trade. For example, in order to obtain weapons, rebels or other non-state actors set up business relationships with commodity traders to exploit and trade the resources in the areas they occupy. The trafficking and smuggling of raw materials, such as minerals, timber, palm oil, coffee, and other commodities, from war zones to international markets, call for a broker.

This is the context in which brokers organize the necessary contacts abroad to market these commodities or to set up supply lines of weaponry, ammunition, uniforms, medical supplies, and food for the warring parties. By interacting with diamond buyers, oil companies, drug cartels, and weapon suppliers, these actors—who have a dual role, both as commodity brokers and as weapons brokers—effectively link international markets to the warring parties in what has been described as the 'globalization of the war economy' (Kaldor, 1999).

Brokers play dual roles, facilitating both commodities (e.g. diamonds, drugs) and weapons deals. In doing so, they link international markets to the warring parties, thus fuelling the 'globalization of the war economy'

Box 3.6 Brokers and the broader picture

The activities of Yair Klein, a former reserve Lieutenant-Colonel in the Israeli army, illustrate the adaptability of arms brokering skills in the broader picture.

Between 1987-89, Klein allegedly provided paramilitary training to the death squads of the Medellin cartel in Colombia (*Agence France Presse*, 15 January 1999). In 1991, he was found guilty by an Israeli court of exporting 400 Galil rifles and 100 Uzi sub-machine guns without license to the same group in Colombia, routing the goods through Antigua (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 March 1991). Despite having been convicted in Israel, Klein went on to train RUF fighters based in Liberia in 1996, in return for which he allegedly secured the right to operate a rubber plantation and a diamond company (*Agence France Presse*, 5 February 1999). In March 1999, following his arrest by authorities in Sierra Leone, Klein admitted to acquiring Ukrainian and Libyan arms for the RUF (*Reuters*, 19 February 1999). In April 2000, Klein was acquitted under ambiguous circumstances and allowed to return to Israel (*The Jerusalem Post*, 24 April 2000).

The link between raw materials, the arms trade, and warfare is being increasingly acknowledged.

The link between raw materials, the arms trade, and warfare is being increasingly acknowledged within the United Nations. Following its investigations into the diamond and weapons trade in Angola and Sierra Leone,²¹ the UN Security Council recently established a panel of experts to investigate the financing of the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Security Council Resolution 1304, June 2000). The occupation by several armed non-state groups in East Congo of resource-rich, but protection-poor, bits of territory has led to factionalism and internal fighting over the spoils of war. Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe—the allies of the late President of the DRC, Laurent Kabila—all have troops deployed in the DRC and are exploiting this territory under their control to finance their efforts to resist the rebels that are supported by Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda.

Case Study: Central Africa: Chinese arms companies, such as Norinco, have functioned as some of the largest small arms suppliers for brokered deals to Africa (PRODUCERS). Gradually, they have sought alliances with local partners, reaping their rewards from African mineral riches.

For example, in 1996 it was reported that President Mugabe's Government in Zimbabwe gave the then armed opposition leader, the late Laurent Kabila, US\$ 5 million to finance his rebellion against Zaire's President Mobutu. Just before Kinshasa fell to Kabila, Zimbabwe Defence Industries (ZDI), a state-owned company, concluded a US\$ 53 million three-way deal with China to supply Kabila with everything from food and uniforms to mortar bombs. ZDI was then used to spearhead Zimbabwe's economic penetration of the DRC. ZDI had been extremely secretive but in 1993, the last year when such information was provided, its directors included the head of Zimbabwe's army, General Vitalis Zvinvashe, and Perence Shiri, the former head of the notorious Zimbabwe 5th Brigade (*Focus Newsletter*, November 2000; *ZBC Radio*, 2000; *Le Monde*, 17 November 1998; *Sunday Telegraph*, 8 November 1998).

Gradually the efforts of Shiri, Zvinvashe, and other top officials in Zimbabwe have led to a lucrative network of intertwined commercial and military interests in the DRC. This follows a Chinese model centred on the supply of arms and the extraction of minerals. Zvinvashe and his brother are also directors of Operation Sovereign Legitimacy (OSLEG) that is viewed as the economic wing of the Zimbabwean armed forces. OSLEG wanted, above all, to acquire mining concessions that Kabila had promised. The first such venture was with Comiex-Congo, producing a new joint company, Cosleg. Then followed a joint venture with the Omani-owned Oryx Natural Resources to form Oryx-Zimcon. In January 2000, Oryx Natural Resources bought Petra diamonds and re-named it Oryx Diamonds (*Focus Newsletter*, November 2000).

Oryx has been partly owned by Zidco Holdings, a company run by the ruling Zimbabwean political party, Zanu-PF, which is, in turn, 55 per cent owned by another Zanu-PF company, M&S Syndicate. Zidco's directors are two Malawian Asian brothers, who have residence in the UK, and who have long

supported the Zanu-PF ruling party. The other two partners are politicians and businessmen—Emmerson Mnangagwa and Sidney Sekeramayi, both of whom are extremely close to President Mugabe—who have controlled Zimbabwe's Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) ever since majority rule in the 1980s.

Mnangagwa also played a key role in the expansion of Zanu-PF's financial interests into the DRC. In May 1999, he admitted that he had introduced representatives of a Chinese arms company, two transport companies, a banking group, and a power company to Laurent Kabila and that they had all established businesses there. One of Zidco's subsidiaries, the First Bank Corporation, then set up in Kinshasa (Sunday Telegraph, 8 November 1998).

Other associates of Mnangagwa went into business ferrying arms and supplies between Zimbabwe and the DRC. The first was Billy Rautenbach's Wheels of Africa road haulage company, based in South Africa and several surrounding countries. The second was General Vitalis Zvinavashe, with his company, Zvinavashe Transport. Mnangagwa then helped to broker an arms deal for Kabila of 21,000 AK-47s and US\$ 53 million worth of heavy arms, all from China. Mnangagwa also worked closely with John Bredenkamp, who has boasted of being the biggest single supplier of arms to the Congo (Africa Confidential, 5 November 1999).

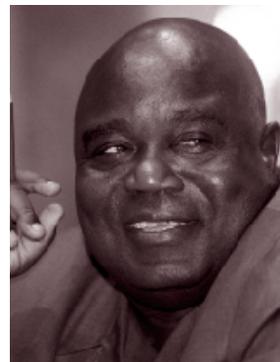
In late 1998, Mugabe instructed Mnangagwa to oversee Zimbabwe's military operations in the DRC, giving him unparalleled military clout, which was allegedly used to help Billy Rautenbach gain a long list of mining concessions in the Congo. The DRC's Minister of Mines cancelled all deals with him in March 1999. In November 1999, the South African Office for Serious Economic Offences (OSEO) and Revenue Service raided Rautenbach's home and business premises, including Wheels of Africa, because of allegations of tax fraud, cross-border arms smuggling, and other illegal activities. Then, in September 2000, after Rautenbach had fled to Zimbabwe, the South African Justice Department seized US\$ 5.7 million of assets from his companies, including an aircraft and a helicopter (Mail and Guardian, September 2000).

Private military companies: In addition to commodity trading, the provision of private military services, in which arms brokering plays a key role, also serves to sustain current conflicts. Since 1990, transnational companies designated as private military companies (PMCs) have claimed to offer—in the form of decisive military intervention—solutions to conflicts that the international community has been unable (or unwilling) to implement. By intervening in these conflicts, these companies became deeply involved in the small arms trade.

The best known PMCs include Defence Systems Limited (UK), Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI) (US), Sandline International (UK), and the now defunct Executive Outcomes (South Africa). Other companies include Saladin Security, The Corps of Commissionaires (which has operated since the end of the 19th century), BDM/Vinnell Corp (US), AirScan (US), Levdan (Israel), and Gurkha Security Guards Limited (UK).

PMCs offer a wide spectrum of services that require a variety of skill sets and personnel. Though not comprehensive, their services could range from commercial security through military consulting and implementation; force training; the procurement or brokering of weapons systems; specialized or technical support; military operations support; and finally combat operations.

All of these roles mirror government military, foreign trade, and intelligence activities traditionally carried out by Western special forces and intelligence services for the covert or clandestine implementation of national foreign policy abroad. Increasingly, governments such as the US, the UK, Israel, or France 'outsource' activities in this sphere to an alliance of intelligence agencies and private sector companies, including PMCs.



The best known private military companies include Defence Systems Limited, MPRI, Sandline International, and the now defunct Executive Outcomes.

PMCs are often ideally placed—with links to governments, arms brokers, air cargo companies, and arms manufacturers—to provide the 'best service' in arms brokering and procurement.

Box 3.7 Private military companies (PMCs) and arms brokering in Africa

The ways in which PMCs have become involved in arms brokering are legion. They have allegedly included the provision of arms brokering services in return for shares in natural resource exploitation through an elaborate network of companies. Moreover, PMCs have often provided advice to governments, as well as corporate clients, regarding what types of weapons to purchase, how to go about it, and where to obtain them.

PMCs can also organize the transport of weaponry, obtaining end-user certificates and bills-of-lading where necessary. They are often ideally placed—with links to governments, arms brokers, air cargo companies, and arms manufacturers—to provide the 'best service' in arms brokering and procurement. Several examples illustrate the role of PMCs in arms brokering:

Executive Outcomes (EO): Between 1992-96, the now defunct South African-based EO was contracted to support the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) against UNITA, including procuring weapons systems for the FAA, with contracts worth US\$ 40 million in 1993 and US\$ 95 million in 1994, in addition to an undisclosed monthly fee (estimated at US\$ 1.8 million/month) for the remaining months between 1995 and their withdrawal from Angola in January 1996. Altogether, more than 1,400 EO employees were involved in the Angolan contracts.

Later, during its 1995-97 involvement in Sierra Leone, EO provided training, armed forces, and procured weapons for the government's armed forces. These weapons, most of which originated in the former East Bloc, included small arms and crew-served weapons. While EO never purchased or owned the equipment and weapons it utilized—all of which had been purchased by the Sierra Leone Ministry of Finance—it did provide the government with advice and recommendations on purchases to meet its contract requirements.

Sandline International: Project 'Castle', Sandline's involvement in providing arms to Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's deposed Government of Sierra Leone, as well as to the ECOMOG regional peacekeeping force in 1997-98, led to the April 1998 'Arms-to-Africa' scandal in the UK.

Sandline (UK) had been retained by Kabbah to arm the more than 40,000 *Kamajor* militia, as well as elements of ECOMOG, to overthrow the military junta. In the autumn of 1997, the operation was cancelled after news of it leaked in the Canadian press. Later, a second smaller operation was planned by Sandline, together with British and Sierra Leonean government officials, to support the ECOMOG's February operations to derail the coup. It required Sandline to provide intelligence, logistical, and air support during the operation, as well as 35 tons of military equipment, purchased in Bulgaria, to the ECOMOG and *Kamajor* forces.

Supplying these arms may have been in violation of both the UNSC embargo (UNSC Resolution 1132, 8 October 1997) on Sierra Leone and the UK Government's Order-in-Council (1 November 1997), implementing this embargo.

Source: O'Brien, 2000

Transport agents in the arms brokering industry

In addition to facilitating arms deals, brokers often organize the transport of weaponry from the supplier to the ultimate recipient.

In addition to facilitating arms deals, brokers are often responsible for organizing the transport of weaponry from the supplier to the ultimate recipient. Because such arrangements require a specialist's knowledge, as well as planning and financial acumen, brokers often contract a dedicated 'transport agent' for this purpose.

This section focuses on agents that organize the transportation of small arms by air.²² In recent years, considerable evidence on the involvement of air cargo companies in transporting arms has been collected by investigative journalists, researchers, and international organizations, particularly in the conflict zones of Africa. This is partly due to increased UN scrutiny and several scandals involving individuals or governments. At the same time, the proliferation, and thus heightened visibility, of air cargo companies has come about as a consequence of the globalization of the aviation industry as a whole.²³

While most of the evidence collected thus far is anecdotal and fragmentary in nature, enough ‘pieces of the puzzle’ exist to: illustrate various techniques and strategies of clandestine transport, as well as the basic structure and functioning of transport networks; and assemble profiles of several major transport networks supporting ongoing conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa.

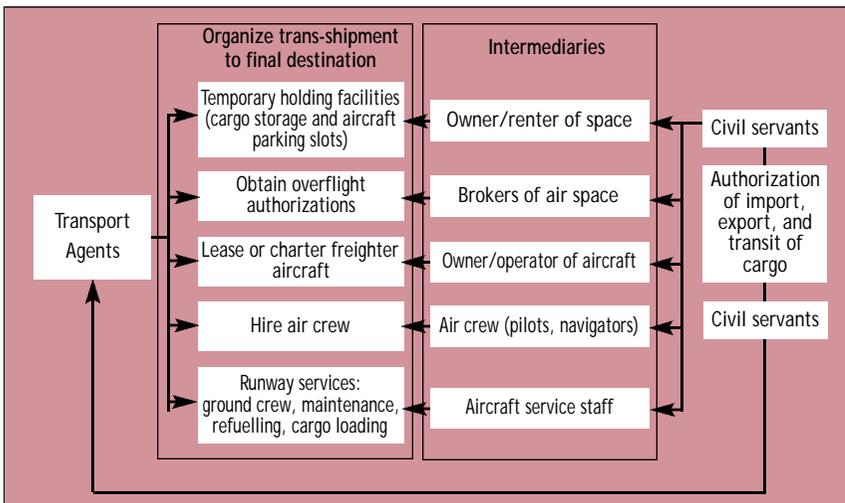
Air transport networks

A transport agent is defined as an individual or organization that facilitates or organizes the transport of arms from the provider (manufacturer or dealer) to the buyer (or end-user) in exchange for some form of compensation. These individuals are dependent upon a network of industry professionals who can, in turn, be categorized into a number of actors and core services as the diagram below illustrates (see Figure 3.3).

- Actors serving as transport agents must obtain the use of freighter aircraft, usually through leasing or charter arrangements with the owner. Transport agents are usually cargo companies or air freight agencies.
- Transport agents must hire an air crew, either concurrent with the leasing of the aircraft (i.e. ‘wet-leasing’) or through other companies and arrangements (e.g. ‘mercenary pilots’ who offer their services independently).
- Transport agents must purchase, or otherwise obtain, the necessary overflight authorizations for the countries through which the goods will be transported.
- Detailed flight and routing plans must be charted and overseen to ensure adherence.
- Temporary storage for the goods must be rented, as well as facilities for the parking and maintenance of aircraft.
- Transport agents must organize the appropriate runway and fuelling facilities.

In any arms transaction, a variety of actors can act as transport agents. For this reason, the term ‘transport agent’ is loosely defined as the actor(s) with primary responsibility for organizing and managing a network of individuals and companies involved in the transport of a given stock of arms from the point of dispatch to its final destination.

Figure 3.3 Air transport: The arms brokers’ preference



Clandestine arms transport flights rarely fly directly to their destinations, but prefer circuitous routes involving multiple landings, refuellings, and/or changes of aircraft.

Each of the above activities involves a number of subsidiary or intermediate actors, not all of whom are aware of the nature of the cargo, its point of origin, or its final destination. These include the aircraft operators or owners; air crews and the agencies or organizations through which they are sub-contracted; government officials who may be complicit in the arms deal and provide the necessary overflight, landing, and other transport authorizations; owners of temporary cargo space and aircraft parking slots; and organizations that provide airport and ground services, such as refuelling, maintenance, and cargo loading.

Because clandestine arms transport flights rarely fly directly to their destinations, but prefer circuitous routes involving multiple landings, refuellings, and/or changes of aircraft, a typical delivery will involve several interacting groups of intermediaries and fellow collaborators spread over several countries. In some cases (see Box 3.9), these groups cohere as loose alliances and partnerships with an interest in maintaining a working relationship. In others, especially where a transport network is used for multiple arms transfers, these clusters of collaborating individuals can coalesce to form parts of a larger corporate structure within which numerous companies are integrated (Peleman, 2000; Cilliers and Dietrich, 2000).

Techniques and strategies of air transport agents

Many contemporary conflict zones are not easily accessible by land and sea, a situation that has placed a premium on the air transport of goods and supplies, including weapons. Transport agents, and their associated networks of intermediaries, employ a range of techniques and strategies in order to avoid official scrutiny and legal regulations, all of which make the industry difficult to monitor and regulate. While these techniques have been honed and refined over the past decades—and thus are not a new phenomenon—the size and structure of the air cargo industry has changed significantly in recent years, including an increase in the number of companies (Whitaker, 1998).

Not only have the number of private companies increased, but the industry's market liberalization has also enabled aviation companies to organize across borders and continents. The resulting strong competition among cargo companies to offer an integrated package of services and destinations has made the industry increasingly dynamic and responsive to users' needs (Whitaker, 1998).

Transport agents use shrewd tactics to avoid official scrutiny and legal regulations, all of which make the industry difficult to monitor and regulate.

At the same time, various networks of transport companies have developed a presence and expertise in particular geographic or commodity markets (South China Morning Post, 8 November 1999, p. 2). While large cargo companies often establish dominance in high-volume routes, smaller operators may be drawn to peripheral areas with dubious customers. Propelled by technological innovation, regional specialization, and industry-wide economic pressures, some of these companies are literally 'pushed' into the illicit arms markets.

The globalization of the civil aviation and air cargo industries over the past several years has eroded the ability of national authorities to enforce adequate security and monitoring measures on the transport of goods. In addition, the demand for black market goods has increased at the same time as the cost of their transport has decreased.

The spiralling volume of goods passing through international airports, and the integration of road, rail, and marine transport networks in highly competitive markets, create heavy burdens on security institutions. A number of countries do not have the necessary accountability, technology, training, and resources to properly regulate the private air cargo market. Thus, arms suppliers can, and do, easily exploit this situation. While international bodies regulating air transport exist—notably the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)—these have no real power to enforce their rules on national aviation authorities that retain ultimate authority over their national airports or the airlines registered within their territory (Peleman, 2000).

In this context, several techniques utilized by transport agents can be discerned:

- **Flight routing:** A few of the techniques transport agents use to conceal flight plans, routes, and destinations include unscheduled or ‘emergency’ landings in order to load or offload cargo, and the diversion of the aircraft from authorized flight paths. Other techniques involve ‘relay’ flights, whereby cargo is offloaded at a dispatch point and then shipped on to its final destination by other aircraft. The more trans-shipment points there are, and the more aircraft are involved, the better the points of departure and final destination of arms shipments can be obscured, making it harder for national authorities to identify and track suspect consignments, not to mention the actors involved.²⁴

Moreover, the routing of arms shipments is made even more complex by the practice of sub-leasing international overflight permissions in which one aircraft flies under the call sign of another, the filing of fictitious flight plans, and lax enforcement or scrutiny of flight details by airport and customs officials.

While many of these strategies are technically legal, some (e.g. unauthorized diversions, landings, and cargo on- or offloading) clearly transgress national and international laws and regulations. Yet they are facilitated by the lack of international flight information sharing and the weakness of regulatory mechanisms, such as air traffic control systems.²⁵

As for the aircraft crews, they are seldom informed of the true nature of their payloads or their exact flight plans, which are conveyed to them mid-route, usually in the form of deviations from their original destinations. For example, following their release from prison in India, five Russian crew members involved in an arms transport to a religious sect in India organized by Peter Bleach (Wood and Peleman, 1999) described how they were forced at gunpoint to divert from their original flight plan and to fly at an altitude of 1,500 feet in order to evade radar detection (minimum safe flight altitude in the areas they were traversing was 4,700 feet). Because the cargo ramp onboard the Antonov 26 could be operated by one person, the crew was not involved in the actual weapons drop, only the arms dealer, Kim Davey. According to one crew member, ‘When there is no accompanying personnel, the crew are responsible for keeping the boxes intact. But when there is an accompanying agent, he himself is responsible for placing the cargo correctly and for the documents being in order.’ Moreover, the crew was not required to check the contents of the cargo, except for its weight (Official Kremlin International News Broadcast , 27 July 2000).

- **Cargo and transport documentation:** Transport agents involved in illicit transfers of weaponry exploit weak cargo verification and inspection mechanisms by falsifying transport documentation. This involves transgressing laws and regulations that require cargo manifests and airwaybills to accurately describe the contents of a given payload, and identify the consignor and consignee. Often weapons are described as harmless equipment in order to conceal illicit payloads. In addition, transport documents often disguise the true entities involved in a given arms transaction by entering only the names of front or holding companies, the sales agents, or other intermediaries—or simply the aircraft operators, who are often conveniently incorporated or registered in distant ‘tax havens’.

The falsification of transport documents is intended to deceive not only government officials but also, in certain cases, the owners or operators of the aircraft themselves. In a case documented by the UK-based NGO, Saferworld, and the British newspaper TheGuardian , a Bulgarian Igla portable surface-to-air missile system sold to the Zimbabwean Government was brokered by a group of Dutch individuals who contracted TransBalkan Cargo Service, based in Amsterdam, to arrange the transport. They, in turn, leased a Boeing 707, registered in Liberia as EL-ACP, from Luxembourg-based Air Cargo Plus (ACP), and based their operations in the Ostend offices of Air Charter Service (ACS), a UK firm that had previously leased the same aircraft. On 3 November

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) have no real power to enforce their rules.

Aircraft crews flying clandestine arms shipments are seldom informed of the true nature of their payloads or their exact flight plans.

Transport documents often disguise the true entities involved in a given arms transaction.

Many suspect air cargo companies are registered in 'flags of convenience' countries—like Liberia, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, and Swaziland—which are characterized by lax implementation, or the non-existence, of laws.

1999, the aircraft was used to transport the weapons system—described on the cargo manifest as 'technical equipment'—from Bulgaria and Slovakia to Harare. In Harare, it was allegedly transferred to an Illyushin 76TD freighter and then flown to Kinshasa in the DRC, whereupon it was transferred to Zimbabwean forces fighting in the country. According to the director of ACS at Ostend, they had not been aware at the time that the aircraft had been used to fly weapons. Whether or not both ACS and ACP were aware of the nature of the shipment, the case clearly illustrates the lengths to which arms brokers and transport agents will go in order to conceal the true nature of their cargoes (The Guardian, 15 April 2000, p. 15).

- **Aircraft registration:** Another common practice, particularly in Africa, is the falsification of aircraft registration, or the placing of an aircraft on multiple registers, in order to allow its operators to change its identities at will (UN Sierra Leone Report, December 2000). With regard to the former, there have been many instances of aircraft changing registration numbers in mid-flight, or simply falsifying them. Other aircraft have utilized operating licenses that have been either entirely fictitious, long-expired, or revoked (Wood and Peleman, 1999, p. 59). Together, these techniques allow transport agents to conceal both the history and identity of an aircraft, making it very difficult to trace its flight path or, in cases where they have been stopped by national authorities, to track down the original owners.

Box 3.8 Victor Bout's air cargo empire

Air Cess is a group of companies that has been operating in many countries throughout Africa. Its operations illustrate the ease with which certain companies evade registration laws.

Owned by Victor Bout, a former KGB officer named in the UN's Report of the Fowler Commission, Air Cess is linked to many subsidiaries, sales agents, associated companies, subcontractors, and representatives in Russia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda, Liberia, Swaziland, South Africa, and the DRC. The network of companies is supervised from a business address in the United Arab Emirates.²⁶

Different branches of the Group may supply different warring parties simultaneously. The group's planes, although under different company names, have been identified in the UNITA area, as well as in flying cargo for the Angolan and the DRC governments.²⁷ In South Africa, Air Cess operated through a joint venture company called AirPass in partnership with Norse Air. When the South African authorities began to get tough with Air Cess and similar companies, it just moved its planes to other less monitored airports of convenience across the continent.

In Swaziland, the Air Cess group used different company names and fraudulent documentation to register more than 40 aircraft. Although registered in Swaziland, many of the planes operated from South African or other airports in the region. When the Swazi authorities received repeated allegations that their aviation register was being used for gun running, they found that irregularities had occurred in their files but had no idea of the whereabouts of most of the planes listed on their official register. Airports in the region where the planes were thought to be based were contacted and requested to ground them.

Even months after the Swazi aviation authorities had withdrawn Air Cess' flight authorization, its planes were still flying with Swazi registration numbers, delivering cargo in Central Africa (*The Swazi Observer*, 11 January 1999 and 21 May 1999).²⁸ The group subsequently moved its planes to registers in Equatorial Guinea and the Central African Republic.

Source: Peleman, 2000

Owned by a former KGB officer, Air Cess' operations illustrate the ease with which certain companies evade registration laws.

Many air cargo companies transporting weapons and other potentially illicit shipments are registered in countries that serve as 'flags of convenience' due to the lax implementation, or non-existence, of laws regulating aircraft licensing and registration, corporate activity, and reporting. In the late 1990s, such countries have included Liberia, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, and Swaziland (Wood and Peleman, 2000, pp. 141-143).

While the companies and aircraft are registered in such countries, their actual bases of operation might be located in one or more countries. According to one source, 'a cargo aircraft might typically be registered in one country, then leased and chartered by companies registered in another, while their crews can be hired in yet other countries. In addition, the plane might be serviced and based for practical purposes somewhere else, with the main operating offices of the airline or the handling agency based in yet another country or countries' (Wood and Peleman, 2000, pp. 140).

- **Flying techniques:** In order to avoid detection by airport and other radar systems, air cargo pilots use a variety of flying techniques. The typical profile of such pilots and their contract crew is that of war veterans specialized in the risky jobs of supplying remote bases and bush strips or flying search-and-rescue missions behind enemy lines. The high level of expertise required for these operations automatically creates a niche market for pilots, crews, mechanics, or loadmasters with a military background and, preferably, expertise in the region (Peleman, 2000). Unlike commercial flying, where the relevant manuals for aircraft type operations are strictly adhered to, this small number who practice the black art of clandestine flying have to know exactly how far they can push the parameters of safety.

In order to avoid fixed and mobile radar systems, pilots transporting arms payloads intentionally fly devious routes and vary their altitudes. In high-risk areas, flights often take place at night, and most electronic navigational and radio systems are de-activated, forcing the pilot to rely on global positioning systems (GPS), a satellite-based navigational system independent of any terrestrial aids and ground landmarks like major rivers.

As one former gun runner explained, "To me it's proper flying. It's not as tough as flying up and down the airways and talking to people; you don't talk to anybody. There is nobody to talk to. It's quite nice in a way because, you know, it's like being back in a Tiger Moth or something ... we do a lot of map reading as well you know ... (the GPS) packs up sometimes so we follow the rivers and things like that".²⁹

Most illicit arms flights land in airports and on unilluminated bush strips that are beyond the reach of national authorities, usually in rebel-held areas. In order to avoid enemy surface-to-air missile systems (SAMs), pilots approach the runways at extremely steep angles, usually by spiralling down. Thus, large aircraft like a Boeing 707 or a DC-8 manage to land on small airstrips with only half the recommended landing distance—and on runways that are often very narrow and potholed or without a proper surface. Even on these airstrips, it is quite possible to land with up to fourteen metric tonnes over the 'book' maximum landing weight.³⁰

Transport networks: The African connection

In Africa, from conflicts in the Horn to the interlinking conflicts of Central Africa and Angola, to the volatile situation in West Africa (i.e. Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal), transport agents and air cargo companies play a central role in the supply networks of the warring parties. They typically fly in small arms, ammunition, and associated goods that must be delivered as close to the actual combat zone as possible—either that, or else to remote areas that are inaccessible and/or poorly monitored.



Pilots who practice the black art of clandestine flying push the parameters of safety.

To avoid enemy SAMs, pilots approach the runways at extremely steep angles, usually by spiralling down.

This section provides two case studies.

- The first—focusing on arms supplies to the União Nacional Para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA)—illustrates the fluidity and flexibility of transport networks, and the extent to which they are controlled by political interests in the region.
- The second—focusing on arms supplies to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone—highlights the transnational nature and broad geographic reach of certain transport networks, as well as their propensity to coalesce into semi-institutionalized forms.

Due to their vested interest in ensuring the constant flow of diamonds and other resources in return for large quantities of weaponry, transport agents have helped to perpetuate conflicts.

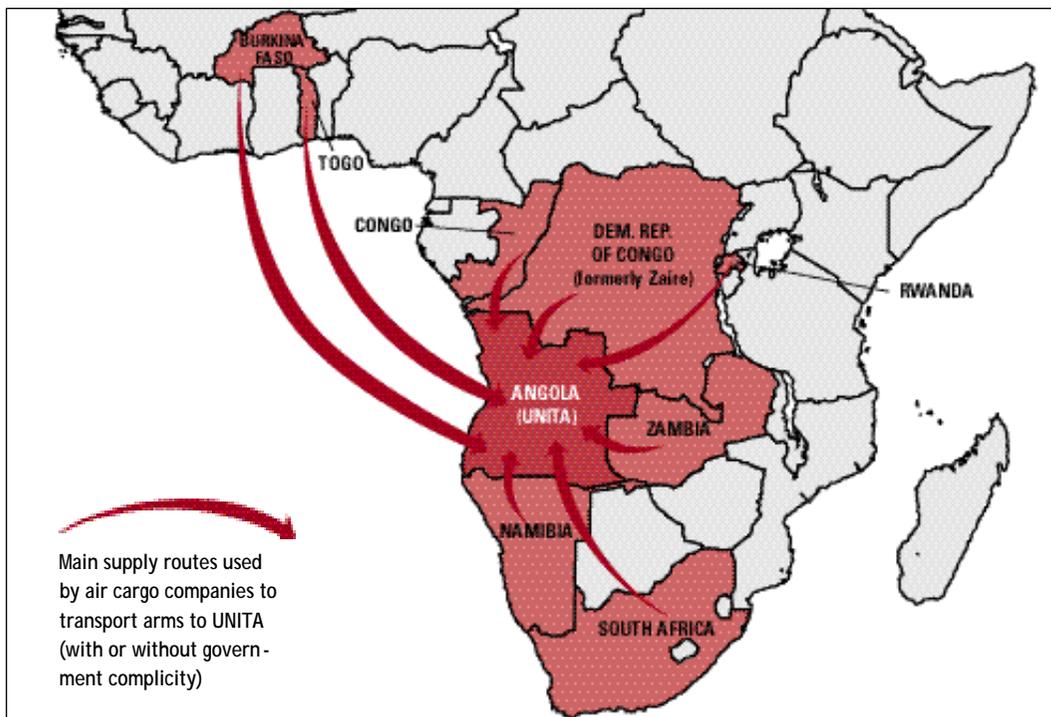
Together, both cases studies illustrate how the illicit transport of arms is often integrated within larger regional and international networks that sustain war economies and are based on political alliances between governments and warring parties.

As the supply networks of UNITA and the RUF illustrate, numerous air cargo companies are contracted to transport arms, either by the warring parties themselves, or by friendly governments, arms dealers, and brokers, as well as by major foreign investors in mining concessions. Due to their vested interest in ensuring the constant flow of diamonds and other resources in return for large quantities of weaponry, transport agents have helped, directly and indirectly, to perpetuate these conflicts.

Case study 1: Angola and UNITA arms supply networks

Despite the 1994 signing of the Lusaka Accords between the Angolan Government and the rebel movement, UNITA, hostilities resumed in 1998. In a clear contravention of the Accords, which stipulated the disarmament and demobilization of its troops, and in violation of subsequent UN embargoes, UNITA continued to re-arm throughout the period 1994-98.³¹

Map 3.1 Arms supply routes to UNITA (1993-99)



When UNITA's Cold War arms network ceased to exist, it was able to rebuild an extensive supply and procurement network for weapons and other needed materials. Its workings provide important insights regarding the role of transport agents.

Contrary to some beliefs, transport agents did not always act autonomously or in cohort with 'free-wheeling' brokers or dealers in an open market; instead, they were, in some cases, functioning as government agents within a larger network. Their foundations were the relationships between UNITA and a number of governments, such as Togo, Burkina Faso, and the former Zaire (now DRC).

Another major insight concerns the flexibility of the UNITA network in adapting to the shifting political alignments in the region. Despite the loss of political support from one government or another, and hence the shutting down of arms pipelines, UNITA was quickly able, in each case, to find alternative routes and air cargo companies for its weaponry. This reflects both the great availability of transport agents seeking such work, and their ability to move their bases of operation from one country to another in short order.

While a comprehensive list of transport agents working for UNITA is impossible to compile at this time, there is evidence of the existence of several dozen air cargo companies operating from neighbouring countries but based in Western and Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the former Soviet Union.³²

UNITA, South Africa and the diamonds-for-arms pipeline: The activities of brokers and air transport agents, based in South Africa but working for UNITA, illustrate how the latter financed the procurement of arms, diesel fuel, and other war materiel through the sales of diamonds.

The report of the United Nations Panel of Experts on Violations of Security Council Sanctions against UNITA, the 'Fowler Report', cites two individuals—Ronnie Watson and Joe De Decker—as UNITA's primary brokers for arms and diamonds throughout the period 1993-94 (Fowler Report, 2000, paras. 16-17). Another individual, a South African businessman named Johannes Parfirio Parreira, was responsible for organizing arms flights to UNITA through his air cargo company, Northern Namibian Distributors, and air charter company Interstate Airways (Fowler Report, 2000, paras. 28-29). One of his pilots, Peter Britzke, admitted to flying over 300 covert flights to UNITA to supply arms and other military and mining equipment (Vines, 1999, pp. 117-118; Africa News, 18 April 2000).

According to Alex Vines, who cites officials from the South African police, arms flights from South African airports to UNITA-held territory ranged from a handful to a maximum of 50 a month throughout the 1990s (Vines, 1999, p. 116). Due to a lack of adequate air traffic control and customs regulations, many of South Africa's 36 international airports, including Mmabatho, Gateway in Pietersburg, and Lanseria, provided favourable flight conditions for UNITA-destined aircraft (Vines, 1999, p. 116). This situation changed only in mid-1998 with the installation of new air traffic monitoring systems, the introduction of tighter immigration controls, and a combined effort by aviation and law enforcement authorities to clamp down on smuggling activities.³³

Zaire's involvement: Between 1994 and the demise of the Mobutu regime in May 1997, the former Zaire served as a major hub for arms trafficking to UNITA, with several of Mobutu's closest aides involved in arms purchases through their patronage of numerous brokers, dealers, and air transport agents. These activities were all part of lucrative triangular deals—involving speculation with black market currency, fuel, weaponry, and cash—that kept both UNITA and the ailing Mobutu regime running despite being isolated by the international community (Washington Post, 21 March 1997; Associated Press, 28 March 1997). Air transport agents operating from Zaire clearly illustrate both the complicity of the Government in arms procurement and their relationship to the other brokers and dealers involved.

The Government of Zaire not only allowed UNITA to stockpile weapons on its territory; it also purchased significant amounts of weapons on UNITA's behalf through the supply of end-user certificates.



Several dozen air cargo companies shipping arms to UNITA are based in Western and Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the former Soviet Union.

In the mid-1990s, Zaire served as a major hub for arms trafficking to UNITA. Lucrative triangular deals—involving speculation with black market currency, fuel, weaponry, and cash—sweetened the pot for arms brokers.

These were provided to a Lebanese arms broker named Imad Bakri (also known as Emad/Emat Bakir) in exchange for diamonds and cash supplied by UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi (The Fowler Report, 2000, paras. 18-20). During this period, massive amounts of weapons brokered by Bakri from Eastern European sources were transported to airstrips in UNITA territories via N'Djili airport in Kinshasa.³⁴

The network in Zaire used for the procurement and transport of arms to UNITA consisted of several Lebanese, Portuguese, and other arms brokers and international diamond dealers, and a group of small airline companies. Each of them was directly under the patronage or ownership of several of Mobutu's closest aides, including his son, Mobutu Kongolo, the head of the Presidential Guard, General Kpama Baramoto, the head of the Special Council on Security Matters, Honoré N'Gbanda, the head of the Special Presidential Division, General Etienne N'Zimbi, the head of the secret police force, Tshimbombo Mukuna, and Bemba Saolana, a prominent businessman. In return for their protection, foreign brokers and air transport agents provided Mobutu's aides with a share of their profits (Washington Post, 21 March 1997).

Air Transport Office (ATO), one of the companies that had been operating under the protection of Mobutu's close security advisor, Honoré N'Gbanda, was identified as one of UNITA's most reliable suppliers. Human Rights Watch was able to identify several UNITA flights with ATO aircraft (Vines, 1999). On 20 February 1997, ATO (together with two other companies, Guila Air and Africair) was grounded by the Zairian Transport Minister for filing false flight plans and making illicit cross-border flights (Washington Post, 21 March 1997).

Until at least 1997, another air cargo company, Trans Air Cargo, was flying weapons almost exclusively between Zaire-based airports and the Cuango valley in Angola. Trans Air Cargo, run by a South African national, Dominique 'Kiki' Lemaire, one of the UNITA suppliers identified in the Fowler Report, also operated through a sales agent in Belgium (Wood, Peleman and Johnson-Thomas, 2000). According to Lemaire, cargo was flown to UNITA on behalf of David Zollman, an Antwerp-based diamond dealer with interests in Angola, DRC, and Namibia, and the owner of a mining company in Lubumbashi.³⁵ In 1998, Lemaire moved a number of his planes to the Lanseria and Rand airports in South Africa where they continued flying, albeit under a company renamed TAC Air Services (Flight International, 31 March 1999).³⁶

UNITA's network in Zaire, including diamond dealers, brokers, and air - line companies, operated under the wing of several of Mobutu's closest aides, including his son.

Scibe Airlift, an airline owned by Bemba Saolano and (at least in 1985) Mobutu himself (Forbes, 18 November 1985), was also found to be transporting arms to UNITA when, in January 1996, an Antonov 32 crashed on take-off from Kinshasa en route to Angola, killing an estimated 370 people (Agence France Presse, 10 January 1996). The aircraft and crew, chartered by African Air from Scibe, had, in turn, been leased from Moscow Airways through Scibe's sales agent, Scibe CMMI, in Ostend (Washington Post, 21 March 1997). In March 1997 one of Scibe's Boeing 707s was grounded in N'Djili, allegedly after refusing to allow a customs inspection of its cargo. Another airline, Air Excellence, owned by Mobutu's son Kongolo and Manuel Roque (part-owner of the Kwanza Sul diamond mine in Cuango Valley in Angola), was reportedly involved in transporting weapons and diamond workers (Africa News, 18 April 2000). Other airlines allegedly operating in UNITA territory from Zaire during this period included Service Air (under the patronage of General Kpama Baramoto), Guila Air, Africair, Trans-Service Airlift (owned by Belgian national Christian Vanoorschot), Express City Cargo, Skydeck, Fil Air, and Walt Air (Vines 1999, p. 112).

Arms transport after Mobutu: The role of Congo-Brazzaville and Rwanda: The case of UNITA also illustrates the ability of its transport and procurement networks to shift their areas of operation and thus adapt to changing political alliances and developments.

Following the signing of the 1994 Lusaka Protocol, the Government of the Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) also allowed UNITA to stockpile weapons, which were then progressively transported back into UNITA territory from Pointe-Noire (The Fowler Report, 2000, para. 23). Following the departure of Mobutu in May 1997, rebels captured most of the 30 aircraft serving the

Zairean-UNITA network but some, notably Trans-Service Airlift, Trans-Air Cargo, Fil Air, and Air Excellence, managed to shift their operations to Congo-Brazzaville in time (Vines, 1999, p. 114; *Le Nouvel Afrique-Asie*, July-August 1997). Air Excellence was reported to have resettled in Pointe-Noire and begun flights between Luzumba and Brazzaville. Finally, Air Cargo Express, a subsidiary of the Zairian-registered company Air Transport Office in which Savimbi is a part-owner, was also based in Congo-Brazzaville.³⁷ According to a UN report, 120 flights landed on UNITA airstrips in July 1997 alone (Wood and Peleman, 1999, p. 62).

Following the departure of President Pascal Lissouba from Congo-Brazzaville in October 1997, UNITA turned elsewhere for the procurement and transport of its arms supplies. In 1998, it allowed Rwandan troops trapped in the southwestern DRC to escape to freedom via Angola, initiating a period of co-operation during which the Rwandan government allowed UNITA to sell its diamonds in Kigali. In addition to allowing UNITA's former brokers and transport agents—notably Imad Bakri and Kiki Lemaire—to operate from Kigali, the Rwandan Government also allegedly encouraged UNITA to engage Victor Bout, whose air cargo empire—consisting of Air Cess, Air Pass, and TransAviation Network—served UNITA from South Africa and other locations in Africa (The Fowler Report, 2000, paras. 25-26; *Angolan Peace Monitor*, 3 April 2000; *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 May 2000). Given UNITA's support of anti-Kabila rebels in the DRC, it is alleged that Rwanda had been used by the former as a trans-shipment point. There have been reports of an attempted airdrop of weapons that originated in Kigali into UNITA territory in January 2000 (*Africa News*, 18 April 2000).

UNITA co-operation with other governments: Finally, the example of UNITA illustrates the extent to which its arms transport and procurement network was based on wide-ranging regional alliances, involving numerous governments.

For example, when the demise of Mobutu became imminent in early 1997, UNITA re-activated its working arrangement with Togo, and in particular with President Eyadema, whereby the latter imported weapons on UNITA's behalf (for a 20 per cent commission) and authorized the use of the country's airports as trans-shipment points (The Fowler Report, 2000, paras. 32-35). After May 1997, Togo became UNITA's main source of weaponry, providing end-user certificates to Eastern European (mainly Bulgarian) governments, once again through the intermediary of Imad Bakri. According to the Fowler Report, Bulgaria issued 19 permits authorizing the export of weapons from arms companies to Togo during 1997.³⁸ In one case, the weapons were transported by Victor Bout's company, Air Cess (The Fowler Report, 2000, para. 42; *The Final Report of the Monitoring Mechanism on Angola Sanctions*, 2000, paras. 36-38).

Burkina Faso has also been mentioned as a trans-shipment point for weapons from Eastern Europe to UNITA, through the airports at Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso. Furthermore, the UN Report on Angola mentions that weapons purchased legally by Burkina Faso were then transported to UNITA, raising the possibility that the former also issued end-user certificates for arms purchases.³⁹

In recent years, the Government of Angola has repeatedly accused the Government of Zambia of assisting UNITA by providing airstrip facilities for the trans-shipment of arms and other war materials, including fuel.⁴⁰ While many of these claims have not been verified or substantiated, there is evidence that several companies made illicit flights into UNITA territory. Two aircraft belonging to Metex International, a firm registered in South Africa, were expelled from Zambia in June 1997 for having undertaken unauthorized flights to UNITA territory from Ndola airport (*Africa News*, 18 April 2000). Human Rights Watch subsequently confirmed that these flights transported arms (Vines, 1999, p. 124).

Case study 2: The case of Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF)

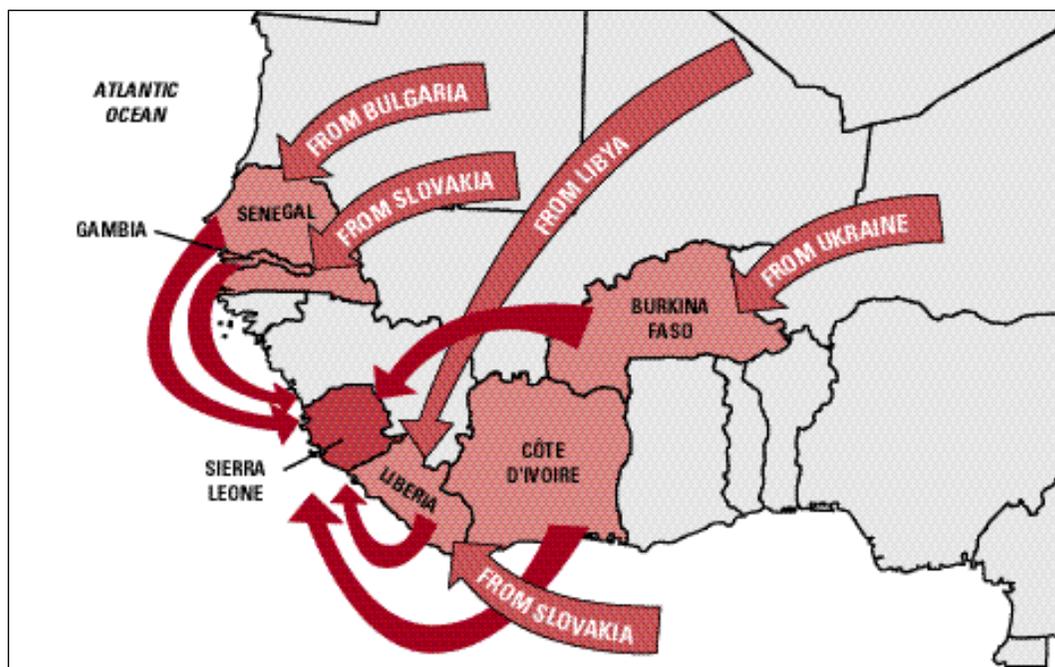
Despite the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in July 1999, fighting recommenced in May 2000 following



In July 1997 alone—in the short space of a month—120 flights landed on UNITA-controlled airstrips.

UNITA's arms network was dependent upon wide-ranging regional alliances involving numerous governments.

Map 3.2 Arms supply routes to the RUF in Sierra Leone



Despite a UN embargo on arms, petroleum, and related material to Sierra Leone, the RUF continued to receive weapons through a clandestine supply network whose operations were financed by trafficking in diamonds.

attempts by the UN peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL) to disarm the RUF (Berman, 2000, p. 12). Despite the existence of a UN embargo on arms, petroleum, and related material to Sierra Leone, the RUF continued to receive weaponry through a clandestine supply network whose operations were financed by trafficking in diamonds.⁴¹ The involvement of several prominent arms brokers, merchants, and air transport agents in this trade reveals how air transport networks are related to larger commercial syndicates and political alliances that span several countries in the region (UN Security Council, 2000c).

The core of the supply network in Sierra Leone—and the various diamond, arms brokering, and transport syndicates of which it is composed—are the ties of friendship and co-operation between the leader of the RUF, Foday Sankoh, the President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaore, and Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi.⁴²

Recent research has uncovered numerous cases of government complicity in the re-arming of the RUF through the sale of diamonds.⁴³ Aircraft from Burkina Faso have been sighted delivering weaponry to the RUF, and the US Ambassador to the UN, Richard Holbrooke, openly criticized the Burkinabe Government for providing arms and other assistance (The Washington Post, 16 October 1999; UN Security Council, 31 July 2000). Libya has also provided military assistance to the RUF, either in the form of training or arms supplies delivered to its strongholds in Kailahun and Pendembu (Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor, 25 July 2000; Berman, 2000, p. 16). Finally, the President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, has provided critical support to the RUF in terms of arms and other materiel (despite a 1992 UN arms embargo on Liberia), while retaining up to 90 per cent of the latter's diamond profits.⁴⁴ Several key individuals worked alongside Taylor and the RUF, including Leonid Minin, who has been responsible for organizing the transport of weapons, and whose logging company was suspected to be a front for diamonds and arms (The Washington Post, 16 October 1999).⁴⁵

Superimposed on the Sankoh-Taylor-Compaore-Qadhafi network are the activities of numerous arms brokers, diamond and other concessions, and air cargo companies. Because of the inaccessibility of most of its territory, arms destined for the RUF are usually transported via a complex relay system that entails trans-shipment from several countries and the en route transfer of cargo between one or more aircraft. The number of actors involved and the requirements of co-ordinating such operations necessitates a degree of knowledge, contacts, and logistical capacity that can only be handled by a few of the larger air cargo companies, operating in tandem with one another. While information on these transport networks is scanty, a few cases uncovered provide important insights into their structure and activities, as well as the complicity of several governments.

One example that clearly indicates how the RUF received military supplies with which to initiate the recent rounds of fighting is the case of Sky Air Cargo Services UK and Occidental Airlines. According to some reports, these airlines, the first registered in the UK, and the second in Belgium, jointly transported more than 400 tons of military weapons to the RUF between late 1998 and early 1999. The flights undertaken by both airlines originated in Bratislava (Slovakia). Although flight documents showed Uganda as the final destination, these aircraft were subsequently deviated to Liberia and Gambia. There, the cargo was switched to other aircraft that delivered it to its final destination, the Kenema airstrip in RUF-held territory in Sierra Leone (The Sunday Times, 10 January 1999).

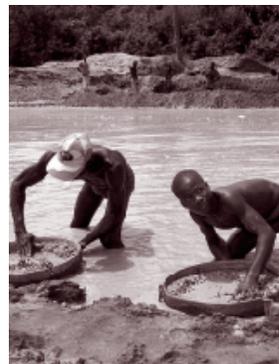
While the identities of the aircraft flying the last leg of these relay flights have not been confirmed, reports indicate that, on at least some occasions, they belonged to Victor Bout, head of Air Cess. According to one crew member, 'I had to help transfer weapons from my aircraft to Bout's aircraft. One of his crew told me they were flying to (rebel) forces at an airstrip outside Kenema. Also we've flown weapons subsequently destined for Uganda and Rwanda directly to rebel Congo airstrips, especially Goma and Kisangani' (The Sunday Times, 10 January 1999).

The activities of these companies point to the transnational nature of the cargo companies transporting arms, their willingness to work together on the transport of particularly large weapons deliveries, and the regional scope of their activities. Indeed, Sky Air Cargo Services UK has been implicated, together with Air Cess and Air Atlantic Cargo (another UK company), in shipping an estimated US\$ 10 million in arms to Nigeria (Wood and Peleman, 1999, p. 67). Air Atlantic Cargo has been spotted between 1997-99 delivering arms to the Sierra Leonean Government, UNITA, and both sides of the conflict in the DRC (The Observer, 31 January 1999). Moreover, Sky Air Cargo was the company hired by Sandline to deliver arms and materiel to the Sierra Leonean Government—with the alleged consent of the British Government—in 1998 (United Kingdom House of Commons, 27 July 1998).

Occidental Airlines, on the other hand, has been implicated in supplying military equipment to UNITA forces and transporting arms from Bulgaria to the rebel forces in the DRC in August 1998 (The Observer, 14 March 1999; The Sunday Times, 10 January 1999). By co-ordinating their activities and, in essence, operating as a single supply network, these four European companies—Air Cess, Air Atlantic Cargo, Sky Air Cargo, and Occidental Airlines—have maximized the scope of their activities throughout Africa. Sierra Leone is only the most recent market to have been targeted by them.

As this section illustrates, the sighting of a local aircraft operator delivering a consignment of weapons is only the last link in a complex chain of activities and actors. Based on the cases presented in the chapter, the following patterns and commonalities can be identified:

- **Airports:** Certain airports, including Entebbe in Uganda, N'Djili in the DRC, Monrovia in Liberia, Lanseria in South Africa (until 1998), Ostend in Belgium, and Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, have served as central trans-shipment hubs or transit points for arms transportation, notably in countries where aviation regulations are vague or poorly enforced, or where the volume of cargo traffic is extremely high.



Liberia's President Charles Taylor has provided critical support to the RUF in terms of arms and other materiel while retaining up to 90 per cent of the RUF's diamond profits.

Sky Air Cargo (UK) and Occidental Airlines (Belgium) jointly transported more than 400 tons of military weapons to the RUF between late 1998 and early 1999.

The UK-based company, Air Foyle, has been implicated in the delivery of arms to the RUF in March 1999.

Box 3.9 Big jets, big bucks: Supplying the RUF

Another revealing case highlighting the international and interconnected nature of the air transport networks serving the RUF in Sierra Leone involves the activities of the UK-based company, Air Foyle.

Implicated in the delivery of arms to the RUF in March 1999, Air Foyle has a prior history of arms deliveries, as well as connections to Victor Bout through Norse Air, a company in which he has a majority share, and which also served as Air Foyle's sales agent between June 1996 and May 1998 (*The Guardian*, 5 August 2000). Moreover, the case of Air Foyle illustrates the manipulation and deception so characteristic of the air transport of arms—both with regard to the entities involved, and the legal involvement of governments.

In terms of aircraft used, over the last decade, the Russian-manufactured Antonov 124 has played a pre-eminent role in the transportation of war materiel between producer and user, from Angola and Burundi to Yemen and Zimbabwe. Bigger than a Boeing 747, the Antonov 124 is by far the world's largest cargo aircraft and possesses the advantages of a rough airstrip capability.⁴⁶ The commercial success of the Antonov, however, has also been due to British companies, which provide both marketing skills and the expertise needed to obtain the requisite national and international permissions to operate these aircraft on a global basis.

In mid-2000, only 16 Antonov 124's were licensed to operate outside the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and thus available for international air charter. Of these, seven were owned and operated by the Anglo-Russian joint stock company, Heavylift Volga-Dnepr, based at London Stansted Airport, while six were owned by the Antonov Design Bureau (ADB) of Ukraine and operated on their behalf by Air Foyle from London Luton Airport.⁴⁷

On 14 March 1999, an Antonov 124 registered as UR 82008, owned by ADB and operated by Air Foyle, delivered 68 metric tonnes of weapons and ammunition to Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, for onward transmission to the RUF via Liberia (UN Security Council, 2000c). The documents show that a Gibraltar-based company, Chartered Engineering and Technical Ltd., bought weapons in Ukraine, in theory on behalf of the Government of Burkina Faso. The latter indeed issued an end-user certificate to the state-owned company, Ukrspetsexport. The Gibraltar company then contracted Air Foyle to fly the consignment—3,000 Kalashnikov assault

Airports in Uganda, DRC, Liberia, South Africa (until 1998), Belgium, and the United Arab Emirates have served as central transit points for arms shipments.

- **Carriers:** Due to the highly specialized and clandestine nature of air transportation of arms, there are relatively few transport agents and air cargo companies involved in large arms deliveries. Many are also involved in the transport of perfectly legal cargoes, including humanitarian aid, passengers, and commodities.⁵³
- **Collaboration with would-be competitors:** Although ostensibly competitors, many transport agents provide assistance or work as partners through the lending of aircraft or crew, and the organization of segments of a transport route. This was clearly the case, for example, in the co-operation between Occidental Airlines and Sky Air, which linked up with Air Cess to deliver huge amounts of arms to the RUF.
- **Carrier ownership:** Many of the larger transport companies are owned by individuals and companies from Europe and the former Soviet Union. In many cases, however, aircraft purchased or leased by these companies are also operated through front companies by African nationals.
- **Clandestine networks:** Many of the better known transport agents and companies have long-standing relationships with governments, non-state actors, and transportation service providers, resulting in semi-institutionalized clandestine delivery networks and procedures. This was particularly the case in Zaire during its assistance to UNITA, where numerous air cargo companies were protected and assisted by aides close to Mobutu.

rifles, 50 machine guns, 25 RPG launchers, five Strela-3 surface-to-air missile systems, and five Metis ATGW systems, plus ammunition for them—to Burkina Faso.

Subsequent investigations in 2000 by the UN Panel investigating arms to the RUF revealed that the first onward shipment of these weapons via Liberia arrived at the Sierra Leonean airstrip of Kenema during the morning of 19 March 1999.⁴⁸ The registration of the delivering aircraft is recorded as EL-ALD.⁴⁹ This poses a conundrum, since the document produced relates to a BAC 1-11 aircraft flown out to Afghanistan in 1996 by a Briton—Christopher Barratt-Jolley—for the use of the Mazar-I-Sharif warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum. However, it is also officially recorded on the main Liberian register as being an Ilyushin 18 aircraft operated by Viktor Sergeevich Bout—a former KGB Major who owns Air Cess and has been named in the British Parliament for his gun-running activities in Africa (Sunday Times, 10 January 1999). Given the links between these companies and individuals, however, these revelations are not surprising.

Other sources paint a rather different picture of the sequencing of the transaction. According to the Report of the Expert Group on Sierra Leone (UN Security Council, 2000b and 2000c), the arms delivered by the Antonov 124 to Burkina Faso were trans-shipped to Liberia and then to the RUF via a series of flights by a BAC 1-11 aircraft with Cayman registration VP-CLM. This aircraft was allegedly owned by Leonid Minin who had previously placed the VIP-configured aircraft at the disposition of Charles Taylor.⁵⁰ Between 13 March (the date of the Antonov's arrival) and 27 March, the BAC 1-11 flew three flights between Ouagadougou and Liberia, and four flights from Bobo-Dioulasso and Liberia, where some of the weapons had been trucked following their arrival from Ukraine (UN Sierra Leone Report, 2000, paras. 208-210). While concrete evidence for the final transport of these weapons from Monrovia to the RUF has yet to surface, fragmentary and anecdotal accounts seem to indicate that most—if not all—were trucked into RUF territory throughout the course of 1999.⁵¹

Regardless of how the weapons were transported from Burkina Faso to Sierra Leone, the fact remains that Ukrainian-manufactured weapons were handed in under the terms of last year's Lomé Peace Accords. Moreover, the Small Arms Survey was able to verify that, in late May 2000, Ukrainian examples were present in the weapons storage compounds at Kenema, Lungli, and Port Loko.⁵²

Source: Johnson-Thomas, 2000

Arms transport networks cohere on the fringes of armed conflicts, channeling material support from external governments and actors.

- **Key roles:** Finally, given the nature of the business, arms transport networks will always cohere on the fringes of armed conflicts, playing a crucial role in channeling material support from external governments and actors. They are, together with other provisioning systems, key support systems for contemporary conflicts (Peleman, 2000).

Measures: National controls and international initiatives

Brokers and transport agents involved in illicit transfers of small arms currently operate in favourable (i.e. legally lax) domestic and international environments. At the national level, many legal systems governing the trade in military goods either do not adequately regulate the activities of these actors, suffer from poor administrative and enforcement capacity, or are undermined by a lack of political will and transparency. At the international level, few initiatives to address the problem of small arms proliferation have explicitly addressed the activities of brokers and transport agents, though discussions in several fora (e.g. the UN) are making important progress in exploring possible solutions.

Brokers and transport agents involved in illicit transfers of small arms generally operate in legally lax environments.

For more details, see 'Overview of National Arms Controls' at www.smallarmssurvey.org

National arms control systems

A large number of illicit arms deals begin as legal transactions.

A large number of illicit arms deals begin as legal transactions. Although national arms control systems have been relatively effective in regulating the trade in conventional weapons, they conceal important omissions and structural inadequacies that mask the activities of brokers and transport agents.

Arms brokers are usually able to provide their services with little or no official oversight or monitoring because national arms control laws do not directly address their activities. Most national arms control systems focus on the physical transfer of goods through the transaction chain, and even that, usually only within the home country's jurisdiction. They are not designed to capture the more intangible aspects of weapons deals.

Western European arms brokers excel in exploiting loop-holes in the legal architecture.

Box 3.10 National arms control systems

Most states regulate their domestic arms trade through laws governing the import, export, and transit of military goods (including small arms and light weapons). Licensing or authorization schemes require arms manufacturers, dealers, and purchasers to seek government permission for transactions involving military goods specified in official 'control lists' across state borders. If approved, they must be acted upon within a specific timeframe and for a specific quantity and type of military goods:

- **Import licenses** permit the principal actor to physically bring such goods into the country granting the license;
- **Export licenses** permit the principal actor to export goods to a particular country from the country granting the license; while
- **Transit licenses** permit the principal actor to transport weapons across the territory of the country granting the license.⁵⁴

In order to verify that the transaction is carried out properly, most governments require some form of evidence regarding the quantity and type of goods, the intended customer or end-user, proof of delivery, and ultimate use. In addition to invoices, bills of lading, and transport documents, such documentation also includes government-issued end-user certificates, which authorize the receipt of the goods on behalf of the purchaser or end-user, and which specify the intended use of the goods; and international import certificates that affirm the intent of the importer not to divert, re-export, or trans-ship the purchased goods.⁵⁵

These are the most common elements of national control systems. Not all states require authorizations for every aspect of a given transaction (e.g. some governments do not require transit or import licenses) or require all the corroborating documentation mentioned above.

Western European arms brokers are able to organize what are ultimately illicit arms deals without transgressing any national laws.

Due to the limited scope of some of these systems, western European arms brokers in particular are able to facilitate, negotiate, and organize what are ultimately illicit arms deals without transgressing any national laws (Wood and Peleman, 1999). Once a deal has been struck, they then arrange for the actual procurement and delivery by utilizing other loopholes in the legal architecture, or evading its jurisdictional reach by routing these operations through a third country. Of the 28 national control systems surveyed for this chapter, only seven have legislation that directly regulates arms brokers (Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden, Israel, and the US). Another eight (Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Hungary, Norway, Poland, and Ukraine) have legislation which indirectly addresses the activities of arms brokers. In many of these states, enforcement of these laws remains limited, especially where extra-territorial operations are concerned. This initial assessment is being clarified with further research.

The US appears to have the most comprehensive laws on arms brokers. The law on arms brokering introduced in March 1996 amended the existing Arms Export Control Act. According to this law, any US citizen, anywhere, and any foreign person residing in the US or subject to its jurisdiction, must obtain authorization to engage in brokering activity. In this law, arms brokering is defined as including ‘the financing, transportation, freight forwarding, or taking of any other action that facilitates the manufacture, export, or import of a defence article or defence service, irrespective of its origin’ (International Traffic in Arms Regulations, Part 129.2 [b]). Brokers are required to register with the Department of State, receive authorization for their brokering activities, and submit annual reports describing their activities.⁵⁶

The US appears to have the most comprehensive law on arms brokers.

In France, by comparison, the law addresses arms brokers only indirectly through provisions governing the pre-negotiation, negotiation, import, export, and transit of weapons.⁵⁷ It does not, however, explicitly address dealers and brokers, although there are a number of clauses establishing a licensing regime for ‘preliminary consent’ to address their activities.

In addition to the problem of lax law enforcement of the main activities of arms brokers, many national control systems do not contain provisions on other brokering-related activities, such as the transportation and financing of weapons deals. While many national control systems contain provisions regulating the transit of military goods, a critical distinction must be made between the transit (or physical passage) of goods in or through the customs space of a country, and the transportation of goods involving the activities of ‘transport’ handlers and the specific routes and transport modalities involved.

Most transit licensing schemes limit the scope of authorization to the passage of goods from a point of production or stockpiling to the border designated as the export point, or vice-versa. Because transport agents, exact routes, and other modalities are not explicitly authorized or detailed under these schemes, brokers exercise considerable discretion in determining exactly how goods will leave or enter a given country. Coupled with weak inspection and oversight regulations at borders or over different transport sectors, this situation creates gaps exploited by some brokers to divert arms deliveries to unauthorized end-users.

Some small arms import, export, and transit licenses are imprecise or vague, allowing for manipulation or distortion.

The vast majority of existing national regulatory systems are inadequate in scope and/or poorly administered or enforced.⁵⁸ Given the transnational scope and nature of brokering and transport activities, one serious constraint of national control systems is their jurisdictional scope (the geographic extent to which a state’s laws are applicable beyond its own borders). Few states possess controls that prohibit citizens or residents on national territory from arranging deals that are carried out in third or tertiary countries. Still fewer control the activities of their citizens regardless of their location.⁵⁹ As a result, most illicit arms transfers to contemporary conflict zones bypass the states with the most comprehensive control systems altogether. Out of the 28 national systems provisionally surveyed, 24 are limited to national jurisdictional scope, three possess ‘extended’ jurisdictional scope, while only one—the US—is truly extra-territorial in scope.

Another major inadequacy in many national arms control systems concerns the licensing and verification of arms transactions. Some import, export, and transit licenses are imprecise or vague, allowing for the manipulation or distortion of the contents of a given arms delivery. Others are open-ended in time or are liable to be used for multiple transfers, while still others lack sufficient information to enable authorities to track the details of a given arms deal (Wood and Peleman, 1999, pp. 117-131).

Moreover, there is a lack of consistency concerning the types of end-use, import, or delivery certification required by different states. This creates many loopholes that arms brokers and transport agents use to divert weapons to unauthorized end-users. Related to these problems are serious gaps in monitoring and verification. Because states do not share harmonized rules for recording and tracking cargo documentation, financial and corporate activity, and the registration of transport

There are serious gaps in monitoring and verification of small arms transfers.

activity—let alone procedures for sharing such information—brokers and transport agents are able to modify or falsify documentation and deliver their cargoes with considerable impunity.

A final inadequacy of many arms control systems concerns the lack of institutional memory. The absence of registers for arms dealers, brokers, and other entities involved in military transactions makes information-sharing between governments nearly impossible and internal control over known offenders difficult. Only five of the states surveyed (France, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and the US) possess registers for arms dealers or traders, and only one of them—the US—explicitly registers arms brokers and transport agents. In France, for instance, Articles 20-21 of Decree No. 95-589 of 6 May 1995 require arms traders to register their presence and transactions with appropriate authorities, while in the US, all brokers are required by law to register with the State Department before applying for authorizations covering their activities.

Shortcomings: Lack of co-ordination and harmonization

Lax customs inspection controls or corrupt customs and border officials prevent governments from effectively monitoring arms shipments .

National arms control systems need to be co-ordinated with a number of affiliated regulatory systems and institutions in order to implement, monitor, and enforce their provisions effectively. Thus, attention must also be given to current operational deficiencies. Lax customs inspection controls or corrupt customs and border officials, for instance, prevent governments from monitoring what leaves their countries. Inadequate air traffic monitoring and control systems prevent authorities from tracking the movements of transport aircraft within their airspace. By not requiring comprehensive details, some forms of cargo documentation make it extremely difficult to monitor and trace the movements of a weapons transfer. Similarly, lax supervision of transport and corporate registers, including the communication of information on registry violations to central authorities, prevents the identification of suspect brokers and transport agents.

Finally, the relatively few restrictions placed on financial transactions or corporate activity in certain countries, including offshore banking and so-called ‘tax havens’, further prevents the identification and monitoring of entities involved in arms transfers. In states in which the administrative structures are poor or lacking in the requisite personnel and skills, the consequences of poor regulatory co-ordination and harmonization are grave, providing almost unlimited freedom for brokers and transport agents to carry out their activities.

The political dimensions of transparency

The deficiencies of national arms control regulations also encompass a critical political problem. The provision of arms to conflict zones is big business—not only for private actors, but also for states. Some states have a vested interest in assisting brokers and transport agents in illicit arms deals for either financial or political gain. They will often provide legal channels for acquiring arms, together with the necessary authorizations.

These states are therefore culpable of having tapped into the grey market for profit, and hence deliberately crippling the effectiveness of their own national arms control legislation. Coupled with the traditional secretive attitude towards military matters, and the covert pursuit of interests in other parts of the world, the involvement of states in illicit arms transfers sustains the grey market for the activities of brokers and transport agents. This lack of transparency has the inevitable result that such transfers remain concealed from international scrutiny.

Recent international initiatives

Discussions on small arms at the international level, both within the UN and various other regional organizations, have recently begun to address the issue of arms brokers, transport agents, and other intermediaries for a number of reasons. For example:

- The increasing importance of small arms in ongoing conflicts means that brokering activities have also become more significant.
- The glut of surplus weapons created by the downsizing of armed forces at the end of the Cold War has opened up new opportunities for brokers.
- The ineffectiveness of UN arms sanctions illustrates the key role that brokers and transportation agents play in circumventing mandatory UN Security Council arms embargoes.

The glut of surplus weapons created by the downsizing of armed forces at the end of the Cold War has opened up new opportunities for brokers.

The recent focusing of attention on brokering activities—and especially transactions in the grey and black markets—is a reaction to changing transfer patterns. The brokering debate within the UN and the broader international community has to be seen as only one of several elements under consideration.

There are also calls for stricter, and better harmonized, transfer documentation, particularly end-use certificates; more transparency in the field of both legal and illicit transfers through information-sharing, the marking of small arms, light weapons, and munitions to facilitate tracking the flow of these weapons; and international co-operation in law enforcement.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE): The OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, endorsed by the Ministerial Council in late November 2000, sets out a number of principles and measures for tighter control over small arms (MEASURES). In addition to advocating a number of common arms export criteria, greater co-operation among national arms control systems, and the need to increase information-sharing and technical assistance in the field of law enforcement, the OSCE Document also explicitly addresses the need to regulate the activities of brokers. In particular, Article 8 (D) recommends that governments require the registration of brokers within their territory; the licensing of their activities; or the disclosure of all authorizations, documentation, and the details of all brokers involved in particular transactions. The OSCE Document does not, however, offer a comprehensive definition of brokering activities, or mention transport agents or financiers.

The OSCE recommends that governments require the registration and licensing of arms brokers.

The European Union (EU): The EU's two major initiatives in the field of national arms control regulations are the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, adopted 8 June 1998 by the EU Council, and the EU Joint Action, agreed on 17 December 1998 (MEASURES). While the former agreement establishes an information-sharing and consultation mechanism for export control systems, it does not include provisions on brokers or transport agents. The Joint Action, which sets out a comprehensive programme of preventive and reactive measures to preclude or reduce the accumulations of small arms, in addition to a provision covering financial and technical assistance, is actually considered to be the potentially stronger initiative of the two (MEASURES).

The United Nations Firearms Protocol: In April 1998, the ECOSOC Crime Commission set up an ad hoc committee to negotiate a 'legally binding international instrument' to combat trafficking in firearms as a protocol to the forthcoming UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (MEASURES).⁶⁰ If agreed, the Protocol will become the first legally binding global mechanism to regulate international transfers of small arms and light weapons, albeit at the level of private activity and not state-to-state arms transfers. The UN Firearms Protocol establishes common standards for the import, export, and in-transit movement of weapons and procedures for international co-operation and information exchange. Moreover, a number of states have proposed key provisions that will affect the degree to which states control brokers, namely Article 18 bis.

The OAS does not address arms brokering in consistent fashion.

On the basis of a US proposal, and as adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee for inclusion in the pre-session text of the Protocol for the 12th session, these provisions mirror almost exactly the provisions found in the OSCE text, with the notable difference that a definition of brokering might be included.⁶¹

The Organisation of American States (OAS): The OAS has adopted a series of initiatives on tackling small arms proliferation. These, however, do not address arms brokering in a consistent

Box 3.11 The UN's role

The United Nations system began to consider the issue of brokering only relatively recently. The 1997 *Report of the Panel of Government Experts on Small Arms* (UN, 1997) addresses very broadly 'networks operating internationally' and recommends studying the feasibility of restricting the manufacture of, and trade in, such weapons to authorized persons only. The 1999 *Report of the Group of Government Experts on Small Arms* (UN, 1999), in contrast, specifically mentions the key role of arms brokers and concludes that inadequate national regulation systems constitute part of the leakage into the illicit realm. The report recommends undertaking a study of brokering activities relating to small arms and light weapons, which should also include transportation agents and financial transactions (UN, 1999).

The work of the UN Group of Experts: In May 2000, the UN Secretary-General appointed a panel of governmental experts from 20 countries—Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Egypt, France, India, Israel, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, South Africa, the UK and the US—to prepare a feasibility study for the 2001 *UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects* to evaluate the possible regulation of small arms brokering activities. This group defines the terms broker, dealer, transportation agent, financial activities, etc. 'Dealers', 'brokers', and/or 'agents acting' on behalf of manufacturers, suppliers, or recipients in arms means any person who acts as an agent for others in negotiating or arranging contracts, purchases, sales or transfers of arms, defence articles or defence services in return for a fee, commission, or other consideration.

After addressing the scope and nature of the problems of such brokering activities, the group lays out the options available for national governments, regional organizations, and the international community at large to control the manufacturing, stockpiling, decommissioning and surpluses, trade in (export, import, transit or re-transfer), and illicit circulation of, small arms and light weapons.

The options range from the authorization of manufacturers and brokers by simple registration, the requirement for government licenses, the introduction of specific legislation governing brokering, the marking of weapons, the registering of weapons, the harmonization of national regulations, politically binding codes of conduct, and international co-operation (including measures to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies) to international information-sharing.

It is unlikely that the UN Group of Experts will come forward with any single recommendation on regulating brokering activities that could constitute an international norm or even provide standardized and harmonized regulatory mechanisms. Opinions on common international goals are too far apart. The options listed by the experts will, however, offer a menu from which governments can choose, so that, in the medium term, this area of widely uncontrolled brokering activities will become somewhat more regulated and more transparent, thus offering greater possibilities to preclude illicit deals. Just how constructively the various governments will co-operate on an international level remains to be seen. This will depend largely on the political and economic interests involved.

Source: Wulf, 2000

Opinions on common international goals related to small arms activities remain far apart.

fashion (MEASURES). The Model Regulations for the Control of the International Movement of Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, approved 4 November 1997, contain comprehensive guidelines for import, export, and transit licensing procedures, but make no reference to brokering. The Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, which was adopted on 14 November 1997 and entered into force in July 1998, also does not mention arms brokering. More recently, OAS Resolution 1642 (adopted on 7 June 1999) ‘encourages ... states to adopt such measures concerning arms brokering and transit as may be necessary’... while Resolution 1744 (adopted 5 June 2000) recommends undertaking a study on brokering and transit (article 5(a)).

Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to highlight some of the main features of contemporary brokering and transport activities in the illicit market for small arms. The findings presented should be taken as illustrative rather than comprehensive. Identifying overarching trends, patterns, and commonalities is not sufficient to illuminate the complex workings of the illicit arms market, nor is the African setting from which many of these cases have been extracted representative of other regions of the world.

With regard to the multiplicity of actors, services, strategies, and techniques discussed in this chapter, it is important to distinguish between the activities of dealers—who primarily purchase weapons stocks for resale—and brokers, who primarily facilitate and negotiate weapons deals, and who organize the necessary transport and financial services. Transport agents, in the form of freight forwarders, charter companies, or companies operating cargo vessels, are also usually distinct actors who play a pivotal role in the clandestine transport of goods, but some transport agents are also brokers.

Research has revealed how many illicit arms transfers start off as legal—or apparently legal—transactions that are subsequently diverted to unauthorized end-users or are used for abuses that constitute serious international crimes. That this downward spiral may have been foreseen, even intended, is in many ways a legacy of the Cold War where many covert transfers involved the complicity with, or reckless disregard of, one or more governments. Arms brokers and transport agents often cannot operate without some degree of government support. If they currently fuel the flames of the grey and black arms markets, it is partially because their activities are insufficiently regulated.

Contemporary brokers and transport agents also benefit from the advantages of globalization. The privatization of many defence industries, advances in communications technology, and the rapid growth of transnational business, finance and transport networks—all these developments have facilitated the ability of brokers to move weapons, exploit loopholes in national legislation and international law, and take advantage of areas in which regulatory capacity is either lacking or inadequate.

In this context, two main types of brokers can be distinguished: the ‘Cold War brokers’ and the new generation of brokers, who operate in or near conflict zones and combine specific know-how with access to markets glutted with surplus weaponry.

Investigations indicate that the world of arms brokers and transport agents is quite small; the same names keep reappearing. This means there is a network of brokers and transport agents who are known to each other and, though ostensibly competitors, often co-operate in the context of larger networks of illicit arms supply. They are often closely linked to government agencies (e.g. intelligence), private organizations (e.g. PNCs) and/or larger multinationals (e.g. diamond and petrol companies).

The world of arms brokers and transport agents is quite small; the same names keep reappearing.

National legislation and international initiatives on small arms transfers have only recently begun to address the problem of brokers and transport agents. Our research has highlighted several challenges in this regard:

- At the national level, many countries lack adequate laws on the manufacturing and export of military materials. While most have licensing provisions governing the trade in weapons, few adequately address the 'intangible' services provided by brokers and the role of transport agents. The exploitation of these loopholes is compounded by the limited jurisdictional scope of national legislation, which rarely addresses the activities of brokers and shippers operating from third countries. The transnational nature of brokering and shipping activities also permits the exploitation of discrepancies between legal systems through, for instance, the use of 'tax havens' and offshore banking, as well as transportation under 'flags of convenience'.
- At the international level, co-operation between states on monitoring and regulating arms brokering, transnational financial transactions, and transport activities is still at an embryonic stage. Because of this, many brokers and transport agents are able to conceal their operations and act with impunity.

The problem of arms brokers and transport agents is also a political problem.

Brokers and transport agents take advantage of the incapacity of certain states to monitor and enforce territorial borders and customs controls. This is particularly prevalent in conflict zones where borders are porous and authorities lack the necessary expertise and resources to regulate the traffic in goods and services. This lack of capacity is often compounded by the fact that, in many states, important sectors of activity are in the hands of corrupt officials, non-state actors such as rebel groups, private military companies, and other multinational organizations.

The problem of arms brokers and transport agents is also a political problem. The provision of arms to conflict zones can be big business, not only for private individuals, but also for states. In certain areas, states have a vested interest in assisting brokers and transport agents for either financial or political gain. Thus, they will often provide apparently legal channels for acquiring arms, together with the necessary authorizations. Coupled with their traditionally secretive attitude towards military matters, the involvement of states in the illicit activities of brokers and transport agents compounds attempts to regulate and control the legal trade in small arms.

The provision of arms to conflict zones can be big business, not only for private individuals, but also for states.

Finally, it should be pointed out that there are important aspects of arms brokering that have not been covered in this chapter. These include arms brokering in other regions of the world (e.g. the former Soviet Union and Latin America); the relationship between arms brokering and other organized criminal activities (e.g. drug trafficking and prostitution); the techniques brokers use to arrange the financing of weapons transactions; the brokering of surplus versus 'new production' weaponry; and other forms of transport brokers use, notably sea and overland transport. Therefore, the findings and conclusions presented in this chapter should be seen as 'pointers' for subsequent research and investigation, to be further expanded upon, modified, and refined in light of more comprehensive data in future editions of the Small Arms Survey .

For further information and current developments on small arms issues please check our website at www.smallarmssurvey.org

3 List of Abbreviations

ACP	Air Cargo Plus
ACS	Air Charter Services
ADB	Antonov Design Bureau
ATO	Air Transport Office
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization (Zimbabwe)
DGFM	Dirección General de Fabricaciones Militares (Argentina)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
EU	European Union
EUC	End-User Certificate
FAA	Angolan Armed Forces
GNP	Gross National Product
GPS	Global Positioning System
IATA	International Aviation Transport Association
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IMI	Israel Military Industries
MPRI	Military Professional Resources Incorporated
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSEO	Office for Serious Economic Offences
OSLEG	Operation Sovereign Legitimacy
PMC	Private Military Company
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
SAM	Surface-to-Air Missile
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	UN Mission in Sierra Leone
UNITA	União Nacional Para a Independência Total de Angola
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front
ZDI	Zimbabwe Defence Industries

3 Endnotes

- 1 The 1999 Report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms specifically mentions the key role of arms brokers and concludes that inadequate national regulation systems are partly to blame for the diversion of small arms into the illicit realm (UN Document A/54/258, 19 August 1999).
- 2 See, for instance, Martin and Romano (1992).
- 3 For example, at the beginning of the 1990s, the US had reduced force levels by nearly one-third. Moreover, the country had a surplus of outdated equipment, after the massive military modernization and build-up of the 1980s. As a result, vast quantities of weapons were retired and became surplus (Pineo and Lumpe, 1996).
- 4 According to the US definition (which is commonly considered the most comprehensive legal definition), brokers are 'any person who acts as an agent for others in negotiating or arranging contracts, purchases, sales or transfers of defense articles or defense services in return for a fee, commission, or other consideration.' Brokering activities cover 'acting as a broker as defined in Sec. 129.2(a) [above], and includes the financing, transportation, freight forwarding, or taking of any other action that facilitates the manufacture, export, or import of a defense article or defense service, irrespective of its origin.' (International Traffic in Arms Regulations [ITAR] 1996, Part 129.2 (a)—Registration and Licensing of Brokers).
- 5 For illustrative cases of these activities see Wood and Peleman (1999).
- 6 Brokers are also used to locate other brokers. According to 'Alex G.', an influential Brussels-based broker in French-Africa involved in a deal for arms to the former president of Congo-Brazzaville, Lissouba: 'I am not involved in arms deals. When Lissouba needed weapons, the name of Jacques Monsieur [a Belgian broker] came up. I was the one who was asked to trace him in Brussels. I brought him to Brazzaville, I introduced him to the presidency and I received my commission. I was, however, never a party to Monsieur's deals with Congo-Brazzaville and I was never present when the contracts were negotiated, so I can hardly be considered an arms dealer. Moreover, I left Congo for Europe in February 1997, months before the civil war started. I just set up meetings, there's nothing illicit about that'. Interview by Johan Peleman, August 2000.
- 7 Court hearings, copies of police documents, and interviews with police officers on the case in Belgium and South Africa. Information and interviews by Johan Peleman, 2000.
- 8 See Silverstein (2000b) for detailed descriptions of many of these celebrity brokers.
- 9 Al Kassir was described by the US Drug Enforcement Administration as one of the most important figures in the international drug trade (Wood and Peleman, 1999, p.9).
- 10 The authors are grateful to Johan Peleman for information on this point.
- 11 The authors are grateful to Ambassador Peggy Mason, Emanuela-Chiara Gillard, and Brian Wood for clarification of this issue.
- 12 Communication from Brian Wood.
- 13 For details on Wilson's activities for Qadhafi, see US Marshal International Crime Alert, 1997; International Herald Tribune, 2 November 1981; New York Times, 3 November 1981; Washington Post, 21 December 1982; Foreign Report, 27 August 1981; International Herald Tribune, 18 June 1981; and Goulden (1984).
- 14 Interview conducted for Carlton Television, June 1995. The pilot in this interview claims he was tricked into the flight.
- 15 Testimony of aircrew who flew arms to Goma in 1994, 20/20 Television, 1994, and Carlton Television, 1995.
- 16 The Jersey company was Ibar Management and Trading and the London company was Winston Investments Ltd. Information from Johan Peleman, 2000.
- 17 For a discussion of national arms controls see Wood and Peleman, (1999).
- 18 The Brussels subsidiary of the American company C.I.C. reportedly played an important role in Monsieur's 1980s dealings with Iran through his company Matimco (De Morgen, 23 August 1999).
- 19 Interviews with Alex G. in Brussels and Budapest, August 2000. On Monsieur's arrest in Iran see Africa Intelligence, 8 January 2001.
- 20 In early 1995 Al-Kassar was acquitted of his role in the 1985 hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship. His name also surfaced in the investigation of the 1988 downing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland (Lemasson, 2000; Howe, 1999).
- 21 For the results of these investigations, see: UN Security Council. 2000. Report of the Panel of Experts established by the Security Council pursuant to Resolution 1237, on violations of Security Council Resolutions against UNITA A/S/2000/203, 10 March; and UN Security Council. 2000. Report of the Panel of Experts Appointed Pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1306 (2000), Paragraph 19 in Relation to Sierra Leone. S/20.
- 22 There is considerable evidence of illicit weapons transfers by sea and overland transportation, but the scope of this chapter does not permit a full elaboration of these alternative means. Because data on the latter forms of transportation are less comprehensive, they will be the subject of future research by the Small Arms Survey.
- 23 UN Reports focusing on the illicit transport of small arms include the Reports of the International Commission of Inquiry (S/1996/67, S/1996/195, S/1997/1010, S/1998/63, S/1998/777, S/1998/1096); the Panel of Experts on Violations of Security Council Sanctions Against UNITA (S/2000/203); and the Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone (S/2000/1195).
- 24 See Wood and Peleman (1999) for a detailed description of the routes used by some transport agents to avoid detection (pp. 69-70).
- 25 Most of West Africa, according to the UN Report on Sierra

Leone (2000), is not covered by radar systems, allowing aircraft to utilize national airspaces with a minimal risk of detection. According to the report, 'at times, it is local authorities or even local individuals who contact them to inform them of an overflight. The military admit that they do not have the means to intercept such traffic, a common practice elsewhere' (paragraph 293).

26 Information on the Air Cess network compiled from: Hain, House of Commons Hansard Debates, 18 January 2000; Founding documents of NVTrans Aviation Network Group, Trade register of Ostend, enacted 17 March 1995; Documents of the registration of Air Cess Swaziland; Certificate of plane registration of Air Cess GE SA in Equatorial Guinea; Document of T.I.T. Insurance Company in Moscow for Air Cess planes; interviews with police and Aviation Authorities in Zambia, South Africa, Belgium, United Arab Emirates and Swaziland; and interview with former employee of Air Cess. Following the publication of the UN Report on Sierra Leone (2000), the British government in January 2001 requested the United Arab Emirates to shut down Bout's operations in Sharjah and Dubai, where he employs 100 Russian nationals (Financial Times, 23 January 2001).

27 The Small Arms Survey is in possession of documents showing an April 23, 1998 flight of Air Cess from Luanda to Kinshasa, and of lists of registration numbers of planes detected in UNITA-area 1997, 1998, and 1999, showing several planes belonging to the Air Cess group and associated companies.

28 List of planes obtained from the Aviation Authorities of Swaziland, August 1999; Interview and correspondence with director of civil aviation, Mbabane, Swaziland.

29 Brian Johnson-Thomas, note submitted to the Small Arms Survey, October 2000.

30 Brian Johnson-Thomas, note submitted to the Small Arms Survey, October 2000.

31 UN measures against UNITA include the oil and arms embargo imposed by Security Council Resolution 864 (15 September 1993); travel restrictions and the prohibition of flights of aircraft by UNITA imposed by Security Council Resolution 1127 (August 1997); and the freezing of the financial resources, funds and assets of UNITA, together with the banning of diamond sales not in the control of the government, imposed by Security Council Resolution 1173. The latter also prohibits all forms of supply or trade with UNITA save those of a humanitarian nature.

32 A list of cargo aircraft detected in the UNITA-area, made available to the UN in 1997, showed registration markings of airlines from Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, and Liberia. These included Trans Air Cargo, Moscow Airways, Renan, Khors Air, Flying Dolphin, HUK Hungarian-Ukrainian Airlines, InterOcean Airways, Air Cess, West Coast Airways, Impulse Aero, Veteran Airways, Air Ukraine, Ukraine Air Alliance, and Valan SRL (Wood and Peleman, 1999).

33 Subsequently, the number of airports used for international flights in South Africa was reduced from over 20 to ten, of which eight could still be used for international cargo transport (Freight and Trading Weekly, 16 May 1997).

34 James Rupert of the Washington Post reported that in October-November 1996, 450 tonnes of weapons were delivered to UNITA from Bulgaria, and that in July 1996, flights from Bulgaria averaged four a week (Washington Post, 21 March 1997).

35 Interview with Dominique Lemaire, *Le Soir* (15 March 2000).

36 Company documents obtained from the Belgian register of companies on Espace Aviation, Triple A Diamonds, and Barlak Development; additional interviews with law enforcement officers in Belgium. Interviews by Johan Peleman.

37 In August 2000, ATO and Air Cargo Express were still registered companies in the DRC and in Congo Brazzaville (JP Airline Fleet Manual, 1999-2000).

38 The Panel also received information concerning the involvement of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia in the sale of arms to Togo, but none of these government replied to the Panel's queries (The Fowler Report, 2000, para. 43).

39 UN UNITA report, paras 21-22. Burkina Faso is also reportedly involved in the transportation of arms to the RUF in Sierra Leone. See also Human Rights Watch, 'Letter to President Compaore' (by Joost Hiltermann), 28 March 2000 and Final Report of the Monitoring Mechanism (UN S/2000/1225).

40 See the letter from the Angolan government to the UN Security Council, 9 March 1999.

41 For the UN arms and petrol embargo, see Security Council Resolutions 1132 (1997) and 1171 (1998). Furthermore, in its resolution of 5 July 2000 (1306) the Security Council prohibited the direct or indirect import of diamonds from Sierra Leone, unless accompanied by a Certificate of Origin issued by the Government.

42 Ties between these men date from the early 1980s, when Sankoh, Taylor, and Compaore trained at the latter's World Revolutionary Headquarters, and later matured into military and logistical support for each others' respective armed movements (Washington Post, 18 June 2000).

43 According to one commentator, 'the deal was that the RUF would help Taylor 'liberate' Liberia and afterward would provide a base for the RUF to enter Sierra Leone. When the RUF entered Sierra Leone there was a Burkinabe force under their command that Taylor arranged to send in. All the arms for Taylor and the RUF came from Burkina Faso, and were bought in Ukraine. The payment for all this was diamonds that went through Liberia, Burkina Faso, and the Ivory Coast. That basic route still works.' Quote from Ibrahim Abdullah, a historian at South Africa's University of the Western Cape (Washington Post, 18 June 2000).

44 For an in-depth analysis of Liberia's role in supplying arms and related materiel to the RUF, see Berman (2000, pp. 13-15).

45 Minin's company, 'Exotical Tropical Timber Enterprise' is based in Monrovia but exploits forests in Sierra Leone. According to one source, Minin used this company (which is under the protection of Charles Taylor) to supply the RUF with weapons in exchange for diamonds which were mis-labelled as Liberian in origin (*Le Soir*, 30 August 2000).

46 Air Foyle Press Release. 19 May 2000.

47 Air Foyle Press Release. 19 May 2000

48 Interview with UN peacekeeping force officer by Brian Johnson-Thomas, May 2000; UN Security Council Document, S/2000/1195 and Report of the Panel of Experts Appointed Pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1306 (2000), Paragraph 19 in Relation to Sierra Leone .

49 Liberian Government Certificate of Airworthiness, copy in possession of the Small Arms Survey.

50 According to some sources, the owner of Chartered Engineering & Technical—identified in the UN Security Council as a person of ‘Eastern European origin’—was in fact Minin himself, though this has yet to be proved. Information received by Brian Johnson-Thomas.

51 For details, see Brian Wood’s testimony to the UN Committee on Sierra Leone, 31 July.

52 Communication from Johan Peleman, September 2000.

53 Air Foyle, an air cargo agent based in the UK and implicated in the illicit transport of weapons to Sierra Leone, for instance, has operated its Antonov 124 on behalf of the UN peacekeeping mission to Sierra Leone, carrying British and Indian peacekeepers. See Brian Wood’s testimony to the UN Committee on Sierra Leone, 31 July.

54 In some cases, transit licenses also embody agreements through to the final destination by all parties to a given transaction, and including all countries across whose territories the goods will transit. The authors are grateful to Ambassador Peggy Mason for her clarifications on this point.

55 These are the major documents used to verify that a given transaction meets the terms upon which its authorizations were based. Others include end-use statements (attesting the receipt and intended use of the goods), delivery verification certificates (attesting to the arrival of the goods to the intended beneficiary), and customs clearance certificates (attesting that the goods imported match those specified in the authorizations).

56 The US Office of Defence Trade Controls has thus far registered 137 brokers as authorized to facilitate arms transfers outside the US, while dozens have been refused. Moreover, the US has granted 200 licenses to undertake arms deals. Communication from Brian Wood, 8 December 1999.

57 Decree-law of 18 April 1939 Creating a Regime Governing War Materiel, Arms and Munitions ; Decree No. 95-589 of 6 May 1995 Relative to the Decree-Law of 18 April 1939; and Order in Council of 2 October 1992 Relating to Procedures for Importing and Exporting War Materials, Arms and Munitions, and Analogous Material.

58 Indeed, as some have argued, increasing the scope of arms control systems to cover all the actors and intermediaries in a given transaction can be counter-productive by overburdening licensing systems and thus reducing their effectiveness. For a discussion of this point see Coflin (2000), p. 28.

59 According to Coflin (2000), three types of jurisdictional scope can be found in contemporary arms control legislation. Systems with ‘national’ jurisdictional scope limit their control to the activities of entities trading in arms from that country to second countries (the classic model of arms deals). Systems with ‘extended’ jurisdictional scope regulate the activities of entities that organize arms deals between second and third countries (where the arms do not pass through the territory of the regulating country). Finally, systems with ‘extra-territorial’ jurisdictional scope impose their control over their citizens arranging arms deals no matter where they reside, and regardless of the provenance and ultimate destination of the weapons. See also Wood and Clegg (1999).

60 For the text of the Draft Report on the Revised draft Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (commonly referred to as the draft UN Firearms Protocol), see www.un.org/depts/dda/CAB/Program2.htm.

61 In the event a definition is deemed necessary for inclusion, the following text was discussed by delegates: ‘Brokering’ means the activities of a natural or legal person who acts as an agent or intermediary on behalf of others, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, in negotiating transactions involving the international export or import of firearms, their parts and components or ammunition. For the full text of Article 8 bis of the draft Firearms Protocol, see UN Document A/AC.254/4/Add.2/Rev.6.

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