

AUSTRALIA

**SUMMARY PRESENTED BY THE CHAIR OF THE SEMINAR ON
PREVENTING THE ILLICIT TRANSFER AND UNAUTHORISED
ACCESS TO AND USE OF MAN PORTABLE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS
HELD ON 16 JUNE 2006 IN GENEVA**

1. The Australian delegation hosted a seminar on the threat from the proliferation of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) in Geneva on 16 June 2006. The seminar was well attended by expert speakers and Geneva-based delegations. The following paper provides a summary of the key issues discussed at the seminar.
2. It was noted at the outset that MANPADS proliferation, particularly to non-state actors, posed a significant threat to civil and peacekeeping aviation. Newer models of MANPADS were particularly capable of causing catastrophic damage to aircraft. But even older versions posed a threat many years after their manufacture, especially if used by a trained operator.
3. While training was cited as a key factor in the effectiveness of a MANPADS attack, there were other technical limitations on their use by non-State actors. It was noted, however, that the widespread proliferation of older MANPADS meant these technical limitations and the need for training could be overcome.
4. It was acknowledged that it is the right of States to produce, hold and transfer to other states MANPADS. But it was noted that the illicit proliferation of these weapons to terrorists and non-state actors was a grave threat. State-to-NSA transfer was acknowledged as a risk. But it was also noted that leakage or theft of weapons from State arsenals was a greater threat. There was a need to ensure that MANPADS were transferred only to states that could account properly for their safe-keeping.

5. It was noted that States had primary responsibility for dealing with the threat from MANPADS proliferation. Accordingly, the civil aviation industry believed it was a state responsibility to fund responses to this threat. The industry was also not attracted to placing counter-measures on civil aircraft for several reasons. But measures, such as the Wassenaar Arrangement's *elements for export controls of MANPADS*, were regarded positively.
 6. A key area for State response was in denying non-state actors access to areas from which to launch an attack. An explanation of a launch-denial strategy highlighted the immense value of computer-assisted risk analysis and periodic searching of potential launch sites. Moreover, it was noted that local communities and aircraft enthusiasts can provide a very useful source of information against possible attacks.
 7. Bilateral cooperation between states was highlighted as a particularly effective means of identifying, securing and eliminating surplus MANPADS. In turn, such efforts reduced the pool of weapons that might be diverted to non-state actors. In one case, some 18,500 MANPADS had been destroyed through bilateral MANPADS-specific programs since 2003.
 8. It was also noted that bilateral cooperation could be enhanced through use of points of contact and improved information exchange. In turn these steps could reinforce export controls and promote broader acceptance of the Wassenaar Arrangement's *elements*. Better controls over intellectual property for production and originator licensing for re-export could also help counter MANPADS proliferation.
 9. In considering an overall approach to countering the MANPADS threat, it was noted that a combination of arms control measures and airport security would be essential. Bilateral destruction programs were exemplary. And the Wassenaar Arrangement *elements* represented a gold standard of export control measures. Its adoption should be broadened. More could also be done to deepen areas of consensus and strengthen the UN General Assembly resolution 60/77. But there was an argument for doing more work outside the complex agenda of the Program of Action.
 10. Australia presented its national MANPADS initiative, launched by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer in December 2005. While noting extensive international and regional measures against the MANPADS threat, it was emphasised that these required effective national implementation. In this regard, the MANPADS initiative aimed to promote effective national controls on the production, storage and transfer of MANPADS. Capacity-building cooperation and coordination on MANPADS was one aspect of this work which Australia would seek to undertake during its hosting of APEC in 2007.
 11. The Australian delegation would like to place on record its thanks to the seminar presenters and to participating delegations. The strong level of participation underscored the seriousness with which states regard the MANPADS threat.
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