



## **EXPORT OF ARMS and OTHER DEFENCE EQUIPMENT**

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE, UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA  
Resolution 88.87

88.87 It was resolved:

- i. to inform the Minister for Defence that the Standing Committee believes that the proposal to increase Australian export of arms and defence equipment is unacceptable because such sales:
  - a. contribute to the volume of the arms race, and thus to regional and international instability;
  - b. are contrary to the government's stated concern for the security, economic and humanitarian aspects of the continuing trade in conventional weapons, and the commitment to the principle of reduction of military budget;
  - c. involve the expansion of an industry which does not contribute significantly to Australia's productive base or job market in comparison with other forms of investment, and tends to divert resources away from other, more socially useful industries;
  - d. will go mostly to Third World countries, thus contributing to the human costs and further depleting scarce technical and industrial resources which are already being depleted by the fact that most armed conflicts are occurring in these countries. Australia would be assisting repressive regimes, and helping to divert resources from health, education, and housing. Every Australian arms export contract would be killing people, or decreasing their wellbeing, even if the arms are not used in battle;
  - e. cannot be distinguished neatly on the basis of defensive or offensive technology, because the use of the weapons depends on the overall military posture of potential buyers. This can change quite rapidly.
- ii. request the Minister of Defence to retain controls on military exports, not simply for the sake of Australia's wellbeing and role as a peacemaker, but also for the sake of those millions of people who are suffering the impact of the weapons already available.