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Workers Solidarity Movement
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The arms trade, the “free market”...
1993

Retrieved on 13th October 2021 from struggle.ws
Published in *Workers Solidarity* No. 40 – Autumn 1993.

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As the UN is currently claiming to be trying to bring peace to Somalia by disarming the ‘Warlords’ a recent US congressional study reported in the July issue of the US magazine *Financial Review* makes interesting reading. It shows that the people who pumped arms into Somalia in the 1980’s are still pumping arms into the third world in the 1990’s.

The United States remained the biggest arms supplier to the third world in 1992, increasing its share of the market to 57% from 49% in 1991, according to the US Congressional study. For all the scare mongering about Russian arms exports they only comprise 5.4%, of the world trade with arms deals in 1992 of US\$1.3 billion. The US total is however US\$13.6 billion..

At the moment the west is trying to build a fear of third world nations acquiring weapons as a way of maintaining social peace at home. For years we were kept in line through the use of the cold war. Now instead of Russia, North Korea and Iraq are supposed to be big threats. States which fulfil the wishes of the Western bosses get armed regardless of their record on democracy or human rights. Yet the bosses tell us that they are against arming undemocratic states.

Two of the top three recipients of US arms exports were Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Both of these countries are amongst the most undemocratic on the planet with despotic rulers and viscous anti-women legislation which even bans women from driving cars. Both have been highlighted by human rights organisations like Amnesty International as routinely making use of torture against political opponents.

The rest of the top ten is not surprisingly composed of other states claiming to be bringing peace to the world. In order these are

- France, the second largest arms supplier in 1992 (US\$3.8 billion),
- Britain (US\$2.4 billion),
- Russia (US\$1.3 billion),
- Germany (US\$700 million),
- Spain (US\$600 million),
- Italy (US\$400 million),
- Israel (US\$300 million),
- Iran (US\$200 million) and
- China (US\$100 million).

That's all the permanent members of the United Nations security council in the Top Ten dealers of death list.

The West and the UN can not be part of the solution to any of the words problems. They are the police for the bosses' profit margins. From the former Yugoslavia to Somalia they have no progressive role to play.