

especially in light of the proximity in time of the Gulf War experience. Rather the Register can only achieve this goal over time. A third reason that achieving this goal is premature is the lack of any consultative mechanism to assist states in determining the presence of excessive and destabilizing build-ups. And finally, even with such a mechanism, all of the states for whom such a determination is critical and relevant must participate in the exercise. The key to achieving this goal is that the determination must be made in context and it would be folly to attempt to develop a consensus definition of 'excessive and destabilizing' which can then be applied to an individual state through traditional diplomatic means.²⁴ Rather, the essence of cooperative security is building on the establishment of a norm such as the prevention of excessive and destabilizing accumulations of arms by developing the structures needed to reinforce the norm and make it operational.

Strengthen Regional Peace and Security. The Register is designed to play a role in bringing about peace and security. As with the previous goal it is clearly premature to talk in such terms. In addition to the points just made, for the Register to succeed it must be integrated into regional and parallel security fora. This must await not only fuller participation but also the further development of the Register.

Promote Openness in Armaments at the National Level. Although not as explicitly developed in the resolution as the previous goals, the Register process is designed to create and promote openness at the national level through the creation of national control and reporting processes. Some states reporting to the Register had to change their national laws regarding the secrecy of military and proprietary information. Others released data irrespective of existing arrangements, especially in respect to commercial relationships. It must be said, however, that many states, particularly those which did not participate in the first year, have not overcome a very firm tradition of secrecy in military matters.

Restraint. A brief review of the analyses and assessments made public of the first year's operation make clear the disappointment regarding the failure of the Register to bring about any restraint in the arms trade. The point was made by both China and the DPRK in the fall 1993 session of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly. Additionally, critics of U.S. arms export policy also make this point. Given the previous comments on the lack of a consultative mechanism to assist in the determination of an 'excessive and destabilizing' arms build-ups, the inability of the Register to bring about restraint is not surprising. No individual state would view its reported transfers as

²⁴ This is exactly what was attempted by key developing states in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Transparency in Armaments of the 1993 Conference on Disarmament session. It was seen by the Western states as a tactic to prevent any serious discussion on transparency, endorsing the point just made in this paper.