

standardized method of marking the components of ammunition.¹⁷ Some scope may exist in using serialized methodology for accountability of weapons at the larger end of the scale of light weapons (mortars and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), for instance), but the volume of even these weapons probably mitigates against doing so at present.

Given that the scope of the problem ranges into the millions of weapons, it is likely more feasible that a register dispense with trying to record the serial number of each and every assault rifle or grenade lot and batch number. Most analysts would view the urgency of removing quantities of light weapons from circulation to necessitate foregoing strict accountancy procedures. Instead, a register should concentrate on accounting for large quantities of light weapons rather than individual pieces of weaponry. In this, observers and critics of the register may have to accept that it is a more imprecise document than might otherwise be hoped for in a perfect world and that analysis of the data may be an inaccurate science. Having said that, however, nations will presumably strive for a level of acceptable accuracy because, first, their very presence in the group of participating nations will signify their concern about the problem and, second, because the data they provide will need to stand scrutiny on the world stage.¹⁸

Part Two of this paper breaks down the categories of weapons for suggested register documentation. The ammunition for the operation of these weapons is also included. No doubt the actual, final inclusion or exclusion of any particular weapon or weapon system will be a matter of debate among the potential participants. Care must be taken to allow enough flexibility to include new types of weapons as they come on the market, or to expand the register to weapons previously excluded, without the need to completely re-vamp the format of the register.¹⁹

In this regard, there are two different ways a register may be structured with regard to the categorization of weapons: the list approach or the general definition approach. The first approach consists of each type of weapon, its variants and models being listed in an attempt to cover all relevant types of arms. The difficulty with this approach is that the weapons business is a dynamic one and new models or, indeed, entire new weapons are constantly being introduced. Also, the same weapon may have different designations in different countries. As happened in the experience of the CFE Treaty — which relies primarily on a list approach — confusion or disagreement can be created when it is necessary to categorize new or modified equipment being introduced into service. In the case of the CFE Treaty, the process, while cumbersome, is manageable because of the large, relatively few and easily identifiable type of weapons systems which the Treaty covers. In the realm of light weapons, a definitive list of all types of existing weapons may prove to be impossible to create and, if successfully done, might be a daunting document to use or to maintain.

In the second approach — that of general definition — weapons are grouped into classes or categories each of which has similar characteristics. Guidelines are given for reporting. The reporting state then chooses the category in which a specific weapon or weapons system falls and reports it under this class. Using this system, the onus is on the reporting state to choose the category most appropriate. As a corollary, the register should provide for a reporting state to