

weapons in surplus, given the end of the Cold War. As many have pointed out, these weapons have not been the subject of formal post-Cold War concern (e.g., CFE, the UN Register) and have found their way into the hands of legitimate and illegitimate arms dealers throughout the world. Third, the breakup of Yugoslavia and ethnic conflicts in the FSU are indicative of the loss of control by major powers over these conflicts. Fourth, these conflicts do not need the high technology weapons so dominant in the Cold War arms trade. Finally, the world economic system is transforming into one characterized by both more legitimate free trade and the development of illicit networks that foster the trade in light weapons as well as drugs and laundered money.

In addressing the applicability of an arms register to light weapons, a brief summary of the characteristics of this trade and the nature of the commodities involved is in order. First, light means small and less visible, meaning that satellites won't help much in detection and verification. This also means that monitoring and control efforts by national governmental officials, from desk officers down to customs officials, is inherently more demanding. Second, these weapons are not very expensive, especially given the trends noted above regarding the availability of these weapons. This means that many more types of participants are active in the trade, and financial transactions are open to less scrutiny. Third, these types of weapons are unlike major weapons in that they have little *political* significance. A possible exception may be the case of U.S. Stingers to Afghanistan, and the recent war in Rwanda.<sup>31</sup> But in the main, it takes major quantities of light weapons to have an impact. Given the international availability of these arms, a recipient state or non-state actor has the option of multiple sources and eliminating any chance of dependence on one supplier, let alone a national government. In short, the concept of arms and influence does not seem to apply to these types of weapons.

### Enhancing the UN Register of Conventional Arms

Resolution 46/36L clearly envisioned that the Register would be further developed. The continuing consensus that has emerged around the first year of the Register reinforces and legitimizes the necessity for further development, and these enhancements to the Register can be usefully grouped into five types:

- Improving the current version of the Register as an arms *transfer* Register;
- Developing the Register into an arms *acquisition* Register;

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<sup>31</sup> For an excellent case study of the impact of small arms on the outbreak and conduct of armed conflict, see Arms Project, Human Rights Watch, *Arming Rwanda: The Arms Trade and Human Rights Abuses in the Rwanda*, January 1994.