

destruction.¹⁵ Transparency also began to surface as a purposeful effort. In the spring of 1989 the United Nations sponsored a conference on the subject in Italy and published the papers in 1990.¹⁶ In the spring of 1991, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, country after country began to publish details of its arms exports, and put forth proposals for transparency and the idea of an international arms trade register. The French, Germans, Bulgarians, Czechs and the Soviets all published heretofore unreleasable data on arms exports.¹⁷ As the July 1991 G-7 summit meeting approached, the leaders of Japan and the United Kingdom put forth formal proposals for an international arms trade register, an idea which was ratified at the actual summit.¹⁸

Within the UN support was gradually building for an alternative to actual arms control, more gradual approach. In its resolution 43/75 I of 7 December 1988, the UN General Assembly requested the Secretary General to undertake, with the assistance of a panel of governmental experts, a 'study on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms on a universal and non-discriminatory basis.'¹⁹ Though the study was requested prior to the end of the Cold War, it was carried out and concluded within a far different environment. The group of experts met on four occasions between January 1990 and July 1991, with the spectre of the Gulf War looming as a prime example of the negative effects of excessive and destabilizing accumulations of arms. Besides reviewing past proposals for the regulation of arms transfers and outlining the international arms trade environment, the group forwarded several recommendations concerning the role of transparency in promoting restraint in arms transfers, not the least of which being the creation of a universal and non-discriminatory register of arms transfers under the auspices of the United Nations — a recommendation to which the Secretary General attached great importance.

Concurrent with the study, in the summer of 1991 the governments of the European Community and Japan put forward formal proposals for the establishment of a Register of Conventional Arms.

¹⁵ The reporting on this development was extensive, much of it in German. One of the most in-depth treatments in English is Kenneth R. Timmerman, *The Poison Gas Connection: Western Suppliers of Unconventional Weapons and Technologies to Iraq and Libya* (Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1990); and Kenneth R. Timmerman, *The Death Lobby* (Houghton Mifflin, 1991). The best source in German is Hans Leyendecker and Richard Rickelmann, *Exporteure Des Todes: Deutscher Rüstungsskandal in Nahost* (Steidl Verlag, 1991).

¹⁶ United Nations, *Transparency in International Arms Transfers*, UN Disarmament Topical Papers, No. 3 (New York: United Nations, 1990).

¹⁷ 'Bulgarians to Share Data on Arms Sent to Terrorists,' *The New York Times*, 2 August 1990; 'Germany's Trade Surplus Down By 20 Per Cent,' *The Financial Times*, 15 February 1991; 'French to List Export Details,' *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 11 May 1991; 'Belousov Details 'Diminished' Military Exports,' *Tass*, English translation in *FBIS-SOV-91-006*, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 9 January 1991.

¹⁸ 'Kaifu Calls On UN to Monitor Conventional Arms,' *Defense News*, 3 June 1991; 'Leaders Call for Register on International Arms Sales,' *The Financial Times*, 17 July 1991.

¹⁹ *International Arms Transfers*, UN General Assembly Resolution 43/75 I, 7 December 1988, op. para. 5.