

in the Register in 1993. As a result, less detail is available on arms imports. In addition to these variations, participation differed significantly by region. Participation was high in Europe, North America, Southern Asia and North East Asia, middling in South East Asia, Latin and South America, and poor in the Middle East, former Soviet Union and sub-Saharan Africa. Efforts must be made to improve regional participation rates if the Register hopes to contribute to regional confidence and security building measures.

#### **Examining the Transfers Data**

Chalmers and Greene compare the reliability of the Register's data by comparing its reports with the information available in the SIPRI report. For its part, the UN Register includes details on the vast majority of arms transfers recorded by the SIPRI and provides information on arms transfers which the SIPRI has not reported. The SIPRI report is strongest in reporting transfers involving Europe and the United States; it is weaker, however, in reporting transfers in areas traditionally secretive about arms transfers (e.g. Asia). By contrast, the UN Register provides some information on transfers in these areas. As such, the UN Register makes a valuable contribution to international transparency.

The detail provided in the Register's report is also examined. The level of transparency achieved is affected by the level of information provided on an arms transfer. For instance, reporting the transfer of one modern aircraft carrier, as opposed to recording the transfer of one warship, allows a more detailed portrait of the security repercussions to be drawn. Unfortunately, the inclusion of such detail has been uneven. Importing nations, surprisingly, have been more open in including details. By contrast, top exporters have been reluctant to provide full disclosure, possibly out of a fear of offending their clients in a competitive international arms market.

Finally, Chalmers and Greene study the problem of discrepancies in the data reported to the Register (i.e. when the reports of importing and exporting nations do not match) and conclude that the major arms exporters must take measures to correct this problem. If they do not work to increase the reliability of the Register's data, its credibility as a source of accurate data could be seriously undermined.

#### **"Background Information"**

When the Register was created, instead of formally requesting information on military holdings and procurement through national production, it was agreed that the Register would include a "background information" section. This section would have no prescribed format, and submissions under this heading would not be published (although they are available at the UN Library in New York). Chalmers and Greene "...examine the information relating to 1993 provided during the Register's second year and, on the basis of comparisons with the first year, discuss key trends and implications" (p. 80).

Citing the increase in the number of states supplying information on military holdings (from 25 in 1992 to 30 in 1993), Chalmers and Greene maintain that a significant increase has taken place. Despite this increase, the overall participation rate remains low. In addition, the quality of the returns supplied by the participating nations varied widely. For instance, Canada was the only nation to provide detailed information on missile holdings. By contrast, 16 countries submitted information on procurement