

318. Laurance, Edward J. and Herbert Wulf. *An Evaluation of the First Year of Reporting to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms*. Research Report Prepared for the Program for Nonproliferation Studies. Monterey, California: Program for Nonproliferation Studies, October 1993.

Laurance and Wulf introduce the UN Register of Conventional Arms and its seven weapons categories (battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, and missiles and missile launchers). They contend that there are three ways in which to evaluate the Register's performance. First, the extent of participation by UN member states. By the April 30 deadline, reports had been received from 79 nations, representing over 40% of the UN membership. This number is an increase over the parallel exercise of reporting military expenditures to the UN. In addition, all major exporters (except North Korea and South Africa) participated, reporting 98% of the total arms transfers for 1992. However, a poorer participation rate is noted for arms importing nations as several key importers did not participate (e.g. Iran, Saudi Arabia and Thailand).

Second, the extent of the arms trade made transparent. Laurance and Wulf argue that new information was made available by the Register. For example, it was successful in revealing transfers involving the world's traditionally secretive nations (e.g. China). Moreover, it produced data on actual delivery dates and quantities which have been difficult to track.

Third, the extent of agreement between exporter and importer in arms transfers (through cross-checking). Laurance and Wulf maintain that a significant percentage of the items transferred in 1992 cannot be verified because they were not reported by both importer and exporter. They claim that the Register's verification mechanism (i.e. cross checking the reports of importer and exporter) was more successful for some categories than others. For instance, 82% of tank transfers are verifiable. By contrast, in the warships category, only 11% of transfers can be verified. Four reasons for the existence of discrepancies are offered: first, key terms were not clearly defined (e.g. arms transfers); second, some governments, undecided on the merits of transparency, did not participate; third, some states have domestic legislation which prohibits the disclosure of military information; and, finally, nations with fledgling bureaucracies lacked the resources to collect the necessary data.

Laurance and Wulf consider the Register a positive step forward on the way to effective arms control. If it is developed to include military holdings and procurement through national production it would create "...unprecedented transparency both in international arms trade and the national production of arms" (p. 10).

Included also is an annex reproducing the reports submitted to the UN Register for 1992.