

data being handled at a central point. National data submissions would be changeable only with proper authorization. This could be managed electronically by using commercial encryption technology similar to that being used for computer banking today. A secretariat would then disseminate collected information to participating states. This dissemination might involve the use of the Internet, thus allowing information to be viewed in the public domain by researchers, other governments and the general public. Thus, transparency could be satisfied and the costs would be manageable.

An electronic transmission capability and dependable access to a central server may not always be available in each and every country. If the problem is merely one of availability of hardware for data processing, appropriate computer and modem equipment may have to be provided to allow a link to function. If the technological expertise is not available in a country, training may have to be instituted for the appropriate national authority. Alternately, provision of a computer link and operator may be made from the central secretariat or a donor country with a view to handing over the responsibility at the earliest possible opportunity. In the case of the establishment of the VERITY database for the CFE Treaty, for instance, all of the above approaches were taken by NATO nations to assist some of the emerging Eastern European republics.

Of course, provision can and must also be made for acceptance of data by hand, mail, message or facsimile to accommodate any participants who lack reliable electronic data transmission facilities. These methods can also be used as a double-check, routine correspondence avenue or alternate route for data when necessary. The primary methodology of data exchange and transmission, however, should be by electronic computer link for speed and economy. Experience of both the CFE Treaty and the Vienna Document has proven this to be a more efficient and timely way to exchange data. Using electronic data transfer will more easily allow frequent changes to the data and will enable the database to reflect more current information.

If the information flow is dynamic, data would be exchanged on a continual basis and any country's entry in the database could be updated by its latest submission. Some nations might find it more convenient only to file continual updates and keep their submissions current in that manner. A register, then, should cater for both a periodic recapitulation of data yet retain a dynamic quality which will make it a valuable and living document.

#### Level of Confidentiality

One question which arises is the desirable level of confidentiality for a light weapons register. Given that the purpose of the register is transparency, it appears that the lowest possible level of confidentiality would best suit the aim. However, this may not be a view shared by all participants.