

Part B.5

1995 Publications

501. Chalmers, Malcolm and Owen Greene. *Taking Stock: The UN Register After Two Years: Bradford Arms Register Studies No. 5*. Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford: Westview Press, 1995.

Chalmers and Greene maintain that the UN Register of Conventional Arms is the only global cooperative security agreement to deal with transparency in armaments. They introduce the transparency in armaments concept, detail its historical record, and relate its benefits and liabilities. They argue that the Register has become a significant part of the international family of transparency measures. Their goal is "...to clarify the emerging strengths and weaknesses of this emerging conventional arms transparency regime, and to illuminate the prospects for its further development and use to promote international security" (p. 10).

Origins and Early Development of the Register

The concept of an arms register began with the failed attempt by the League of Nations to regulate weapons transfers in the wake of the First World War. Chalmers and Greene chronicle the various attempts at establishing an arms register made in the years following the Second World War. In addition, they detail the process of compromise which led to the creation of the current Register in 1991, and introduce the seven weapons categories included in the Register (battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, and missiles and missile launchers). Finally, they outline the aims of the Register, namely, "...the building of confidence and security; the reduction of suspicions, mistrust and fear; [promoting] restraint on a unilateral and multilateral basis; and timely identification of trends in arms transfers" (p. 26).

Participation in the Register

Chalmers and Greene contend that the Register has had a good start, securing the participation of more than 80 states in its reports for 1992 and 1993. However, the total participation rates (80 in 1992 and 81 in 1993) conceal considerable turn over. While the 1993 report secured submissions from 23 new countries, 22 states which took part in 1992 chose not to take part in 1993. In addition, the quality of reporting improved in the second year. More states submitted "full" reports (i.e. they included data on arms transfers) in 1993 than in 1992. The participation rates should be considered a "substantial achievement" (p. 38). Not only has the quality of reporting improved, but the number of participants is also increasing.

In analyzing the participation rate of major arms exporters and importers, the Register's data is compared with that of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Congressional Research Service (CRS). Of the top 14 arms exporters identified by the SIPRI, 13 submitted reports to the UN Register (the exception being North Korea), accounting for 95% of the total arms exports in 1992 and 1993. By contrast, of the top 50 arms importers identified by the SIPRI, only 36 chose to take part