# VIII  Opportunities for Harmonization

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### Harmonization

The number of treaties, agreements, organizations, bodies and regimes attempting to deal with the problems of international security is growing, as is the number of nations participating in many of the international groups. Each body is concerned with a particular purpose, but as the number increases and the activities extend, there is the increasing possibility of unnecessary overlap, involving expense and perhaps resistance to what could be interpreted as unreasonable intrusion. There is also the potential for useful synergy, when there is some element of commonality between or among the roles and interests. Some of the data gained by one group can be shared with others, and assessments carried out by the most knowledgeable analysts on the basis of a maximum of information obtained from many diverse sources. The pooling and combination of information can be made more efficient if the reporting, dissemination, storage and retrieval of the various sets of data can be harmonized into a minimum number of homogeneous data banks using standardized formats and a common system for communication and processing.

The relevant bodies that exist today have been described in the previous chapter. They include organizations created by the United Nations, organizations of a regional scope involving security, organizations based on arms control treaties or other international agreements, and regimes established for the purpose of controlling proliferation. There are opportunities for harmonization among some of these. But as new bodies appear, there will be an increasing desirability of harmonization within this enlarging set of organizations with roles converging on the various aspects of co-operative world security.

There are factors acting against extensive harmonization among the different sources of information and analysis. Secrecy thrives on rigid compartmentalization, and there are likely to be subgroups within the larger organizations that wish to withhold some of their information from members not in their subgroup. However, even if an organization receives no more than the "lowest common denominator" of information, harmonization should help it to make the best possible use of what it does have, and to build up the data banks and common experience in analysis over time.

### Internationalization of Security Organizations

Throughout the ages, sovereign states have handled matters of their own security on a national basis, usually protected by secrecy from their own citizens as well as from foreigners. Some relaxations are made in a close security alliance, with outstanding examples being among the Western allies in World War II, and among the members of the North Atlantic Alliance during the Cold War. Nevertheless, each nation jealously guards the right to make its own assessments, and also to determine its own actions, subject to whatever agreements may have been made with respect to common actions.

Two trends have been developing as regards collection and assessment of intelligence information. One is caused by the increased dependence on collective security by groups of states that bring very different capabilities into an alliance. The weaker members become increasingly dependent on the stronger for collection of intelligence, but still reserve a right to participate in a joint effort of assessment, although they may not have very strong capabilities for this purpose. Thus there are joint efforts superimposed on the national activities.

The other trend has been caused by technology, which now permits the most powerful nations to deploy NTM with extraordinary capabilities for collection of intelligence. The major technology of this nature is dependent on sensors of many types installed in satellites, and provides the owners with information far more extensive, detailed and worldwide than