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CHRONICLING AN ABSENCE OF RESTRAINT: THE 1995 UN ARMS REGISTER

Executive Summary

The 1995 UN Register of Conventional Arms presents data from 84 countries on their imports and exports of major conventional weapons during 1994.

- * **As in the two previous years of the register, the United States and Germany were by far the leading exporters.**
- * **Among the leading recipients were Greece, Turkey and Egypt, reflecting continuing arms races in the Balkans and the Middle East.**
- * **Inconsistencies in supplier and recipient returns continue to limit the utility of the register, as does the failure of key countries to participate.**
- * **The register is a useful transparency measure, but needs further development and expansion.**

Overview of register submissions for 1994

During the first three years of the register, the level of participation has been fairly steady. In the report issued in 1993 (covering imports and exports in 1992), 80 countries participated, with 81 participants at the same point in 1994 and 84 in 1995. Several countries submitted information after the first or second reports were published; these data are included in addenda to the register. In some cases, countries decided to join the register in the second or third year, and then presented data on prior years. As a result, 92 countries have now provided 1992 data, and 89 countries have provided 1993 data.

For the first time, a major supplier, Russia, failed to participate. The other five major suppliers (the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, and China) all filed returns, as did six of the ten countries the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) lists as the world's largest weapons importers between 1990 and 1994. [see Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2.] Twenty-one countries reported exports of weaponry in the categories covered by the register in 1994; 40 countries reported imports of weaponry during the same period. As in prior years, a number of countries submitted "nil" reports indicating that they had neither imported nor exported arms in the seven register categories in 1994. [See Appendix A, Table 1.]

United States and Germany dominate world weapons exports

As with the first two years of the register, the United States and Germany were the world's largest weapons exporters. In 1994, the United States transferred weapons in six of the seven register categories. It transferred 702 tanks abroad, 1036 armored combat vehicles, 121 large calibre artillery systems, 82 combat aircraft, 5 attack helicopters, and 316 missiles or missile launchers. The United States did not transfer any warships in 1994. Germany transferred 181 tanks, 1170 armored combat vehicles, 546 large calibre artillery systems, 24 combat aircraft, 2 attack helicopters, 18 warships, and 1020 missiles or missile launchers.

The United States led all other suppliers in three of the seven register categories: battle tanks, combat aircraft, and attack helicopters. It was second to Germany in armored combat vehicles, large calibre artillery systems, and missiles or missile launchers. Germany led in four categories (warships, armored combat vehicles, large calibre artillery systems, and missiles or missile launchers), was second to the United States in battle tanks, tied for second behind the

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United States in attack helicopters, and was fifth in combat aircraft. [See Appendix A, Table 2.]

As in prior years, the German government provided significant detail on its transfers, giving the specific type and model of each weapon exported. The German submission also included the government's statement that Germany has a restrictive export policy and that most of its transfers were to NATO members. The German note did not mention the fact that traditional adversaries (Greece and Turkey) were two of the largest recipients of German weaponry.

In contrast with the German return, the US return provided minimal information. As was the case with the two previous editions of the register, the United States did not provide descriptions of the items transferred or comment on the transfers. The US return gives only the category of weapon transferred, the final importer, and the number of items.

Greece, Turkey, Egypt among leading recipients

Because the register provides incomplete information on the capabilities or value of the weapons transferred, it is impossible to establish absolute rankings of recipients. However, the supplier and recipient reports give a general sense of which countries received the most weaponry in a given year. According to the register, in 1994, three of the leading weapons recipients were Greece, Turkey, and Egypt. Since Egypt did not report, only supplier submissions can be used to generate information on Egyptian imports. Turkey and Greece both reported, as did their major suppliers. This provides the opportunity to cross-check recipient and supplier data. [See Appendix A, Table 3.]

According to exporter reports, in 1994, Greece received most of its weaponry from Germany, including 21 tanks, 222 large calibre artillery systems, a ship, five combat aircraft, and 701 armored combat vehicles. Greece also received a frigate and 175 armored combat vehicles from the Netherlands, with the latter originating in the United States. Greece received less weaponry directly from the United States than in the past; the United States reported transfers of 120 armored combat vehicles and two large calibre artillery systems.

Similarly, exporter reports indicate that almost all of Turkey's imports in 1994 came from Germany and the United States. Germany reported transferring 131 large calibre artillery systems, 19 combat aircraft, and one ship; the United States reported transfers of 74 armored combat vehicles, 25 combat aircraft, and an attack helicopter. Turkey also received one armored combat vehicle from Romania.

The United States reported transferring a large quantity of weaponry to Egypt, including 434 tanks, 188 armored combat vehicles, 63 large calibre artillery systems, and 20 combat aircraft. The only other country reporting exports to Egypt was the Czech Republic, which reported transferring 23 combat aircraft to Egypt in 1994.

For further information, please see Tasos Kokkinides and Otfried Nassauer, "NATO Arms Exports to Turkey and Greece: Inconsistencies Revealed," BASIC Notes, July 1995.

Key countries fail to participate

Though 150 countries voted to establish the register in the General Assembly in 1991, the register still commands the participation of only about half of the UN member states. The voluntary nature of the register and lack of political will on the part of major suppliers to require participation from their client states has left the register far from its goal of universal participation. In addition, the contentious issues of expansion and refinement of the register have led important states, such as Egypt, who reported for 1992, to refuse to submit reports for 1993 and 1994. Lack of expansion of the register may also be the reason for non-participation of many countries in regions such as Africa, where the seven categories of major weapons included in the register are largely irrelevant to the weapons trade in that area.

Insufficient resources to compile the appropriate information have also been cited as a reason for non-participation. Other states have found it difficult to prepare their submissions in time for publication of the register, though while submissions are officially due by 30 April, publication has been delayed until October in all three years to accommodate states who need the extra time to compile the data.

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Returns for non-participating states can be often pieced together from other importer and exporter forms, but the failure of key states to participate inhibits cross-checking of import and export reports for discrepancies. In addition, transfers will be missing from the register if neither the supplier nor the recipient state participates.

For 1994, the costs of non-participation are particularly apparent in the failure of Russia to submit its report to the register. Some of its exports are found in import submissions, but other transfers such as those to Iran and the United Arab Emirates, who also did not submit reports for 1994, are not included in the data. According to importer reports, in 1994 Russia exported: 54 armored combat vehicles to Turkey; 120 large calibre artillery systems to India and 9 to Finland; 18 MiG-29 combat aircraft to Malaysia, and one each to Romania and Slovakia; one warship to China; and 342 missiles or missile launchers to Hungary. Finland also reported receiving transfers of 30 armored combat vehicles and 193 large calibre artillery systems from Germany which originated in Russia.

Inconsistencies in supplier and recipient data

Inconsistencies between supplier and recipient returns have been common in each year of the register. There is no agreed method of reconciling these discrepancies, many of which result from differing interpretations of the definitions for reporting categories, and lack of shared understanding of when the transfer is considered to be complete -- whether at the time of transfer of control, transfer of title, or otherwise. Complications have also arisen in accounting for multi-year transfers and leasing arrangements.

Cross-checking importer and exporter submissions reveals that this lack of standardization of reporting procedures results in numerous inconsistencies. In some cases, discrepancies occur due to differing definitions of what constitutes a particular weapons system. Malaysia reported importing 15,230 units of 81mm artillery from France, for example, while France did not report any exports of artillery to Malaysia. Presumably, Malaysia is reporting ammunition imports for 81mm artillery, not imports of the artillery itself.

In other cases, only one party to a given transfer has reported the data: the importer may report receiving

weapons not included in the supplier's export submission or vice-versa. For example, Turkey reported importing 62 M-60A1 tanks and leasing four Knox class frigates from the United States, but the United States did not report either transfer.

There are also variations regarding the time weapons spend in transit from the exporter to the importer. For example, Greece reported receiving 43 Leopard 1 tanks from Germany in 1994, while Germany reported exporting only 21 to Greece. The missing 22 tanks were shipped by the Germans in late 1993 and included in Germany's 1993 export data but received by Greece in 1994 and included in its 1994 data.

Unfortunately, when one of the parties to a transfer does not participate in the register, this type of cross-checking is not possible.

For more in-depth analysis of inconsistencies among returns, and notations on cross-checking for each transaction, see Edward J. Laurance and Tracy Keith, "An Evaluation of the Third Year of Reporting to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms," Monterey Institute of International Studies, 31 October 1995.

A step in the right direction

While there is ample room for expansion, improvement, and refinement of the register in terms of both substance and process, the three years of its operation have brought the international community a step forward in increasing the transparency of the international weapons trade. While the quality and quantity of information provided could be much improved, even this basic information is much more than many governments would otherwise provide to their parliaments. Thus, in addition to increasing transparency, the register has positive secondary effects of increasing access to data and accountability of national governments. In addition, the register has been a focal point for solidifying international support for transparency in weapons transfers and has served as a stepping stone to other regional initiatives. Finally, while the United Nations does not provide for intensive dissemination or analysis of the register, its existence has been a useful tool for highlighting dangerous arms races, as evidenced by the data provided on the massive weapons transfers to Greece and Turkey.

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Despite its limitations, the UN Register is the only official international compilation of data on major conventional weapons transfers. The register provides new information on transfers, and also complements unofficial sources such as the annual report prepared by SIPRI by offering an additional reference for cross-checking data. The optional information on holdings and procurement through national production also provides valuable data to governments, analysts, and the general public. Moving toward universal participation in the register and encouraging submission of supplemental information would increase the quantity of data available, and boost the usefulness of the exercise.

Many criticisms of the register have centered around its limited scope, lack of compliance, absence of verification measures, and inaccuracies resulting from the lack of standardization of reporting procedures. These issues will likely be discussed by the experts' group charged with assessing the register's progress in 1997. However, some of these weaknesses could be remedied by unilateral or multi-lateral actions by concerned governments. For example, in order to encourage participation of all UN member states, leading suppliers could make participation in the register a condition of weapons exports, and could also encourage client states to provide the optional information on holdings and procurement through national production. Leading suppliers should also take the lead in supplying as much information as possible in their own yearly submissions. In this regard, as the top supplier of weaponry, the United States should be particularly forthcoming with details of its transactions, providing accurate and detailed data on its exports.

Improving the usefulness and effectiveness of the register is not dependent only on developments at the United Nations. Rather, suppliers and recipients alike must translate their rhetorical support for the register into an active commitment to transparency of the international weapons trade. In turn, transparency alone is of limited utility. Unless nations can move from transparency to restraint, the register will simply chronicle continuing arms races.

Need for development and expansion

Many countries have pressed for expansion of the register to include additional weapons, such as landmines, as well as domestic production of weapons and national holdings. Some countries have also suggested that regional

registers could deal with smaller weapons than those covered by the global register. Light weapons are responsible for most of the killing in conflicts around the world today, and are gathering increasing attention internationally. Many analysts and advocates argue that in order for the global register to thrive, it must either be expanded to take into account these transfers of smaller weapons or regional registers must be developed to deal with these weapons.

In 1994, the committee of experts appointed by the United Nations failed to reach agreement on any expansion of the register. The UN Register is not likely to be modified until after the next experts' group meets in 1997. As a result, there is a window of opportunity for developing regional registers and other measures to complement the global register.

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Key:

UN Register categories, with abbreviations used in the tables that follow:

- I. Battle tanks (Tank)**
- II. Armored combat vehicles (ACV)**
- III. Large calibre artillery systems (LCA)**
- IV. Combat aircraft (Cbt acft)**
- V. Attack helicopters (Atk helo)**
- VI. Warships (Ship)**
- VII. Missiles and missile launchers (M/ML)**

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APPENDIX A: 1995 UN REGISTER DATA

TABLE 1: EXPORTER DECLARATIONS

Country	Battle Tanks	Armoured Combat Vehicles	Large Calibre Artillery Systems	Combat Aircraft	Attack Helicopters	Warships	Missiles/Launchers
Belarus	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Belgium	0	277	0	25	0	0	0
Bulgaria	62	0	11	0	0	0	0
Canada	0	260	0	0	0	0	0
China	82	0	0	0	0	6	0
Czech Rep.	40	177	0	51	0	0	0
Finland	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
France	5	72	0	2	1	0	56
Germany	181	1170	546	24	2	18	1020
Israel	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
Italy	0	0	2	2	2	0	0
Netherlands	0	175	16	0	0	2	0
Poland	84	50	0	0	0	0	0
Rep. of Korea	0	22	0	0	0	0	0
Moldova	0	0	13	4	0	0	0
Romania	0	32	6	0	0	0	0
Slovakia	1	169	47	1	0	0	0
S. Africa	***	***	0	0	0	0	0
Ukraine	50	16	0	0	0	0	74
UK	18	35	88	43	2	9	196
United States	702	1036	121	82	5	0	316
TOTAL	1225	3498	860	234	12	35	1662

Source: BASIC, based on UN Register data

*** The South African submission does not indicate the importer state or number of items for these categories, noting that, "Confidentiality claims in the specific contracts preclude publication of further details."

Note: This table lists all exporter submissions to the UN Register for calendar year 1994.

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TABLE 2: EXPORT SUBMISSIONS BY SELECTED SUPPLIERS

	Battle Tanks	Armoured Combat Vehicles	Large Calibre Artillery Systems	Combat Aircraft	Attack Helicopters	Warships	Missiles and Missile Launchers
United States	702	1036	121	82	5	0	316
Germany	181	1170	546	24	2	18	1020
United Kingdom	18	35	88	43	2	9	196
Czech Republic	40	177	0	51	0	0	0
France	5	72	0	2	1	0	56
China	82	0	0	0	0	6	0
Belgium	0	277	0	25	0	0	0
Other	197	731	105	7	2	2	74
TOTAL	1225	3498	860	234	12	35	1662

Source: BASIC, based on UN Register data

TABLE 3: SELECTED WEAPONS IMPORTERS, ACCORDING TO SUPPLIER REPORTS

Importer	Category	Exporter	# of Items	Comments
Cambodia	Tank	Czech Rep.	40	T-55
	ACV	Czech Rep.	26	OT-64
	Tank	Poland	50	T-55A
Egypt	Cbt acft	Czech Rep.	23	Advanced jet trainer L-59
	Tanks	USA	434	
	ACV	USA	188	
	LCA	USA	63	
	Cbt acft	USA	20	
Finland	ACV	Germany	30	BMP-1
	LCA	Germany	27	2S-1
	LCA	Germany	166	Gun 46, 130mm
	Cbt acft	UK	5	
Greece	Tank	Germany	21	Leopard 1 A 5
	Ship	Germany	1	Auxiliary
	Cbt acft	Germany	5	RF-4
	ACV	Germany	200	MTW M 113
	ACV	Germany	501	BMP-1
	LCA	Germany	72	Armored howitzer M-110
	LCA	Germany	150	RM-70 Rocket launchers
	ACV	Netherlands	175	M-113 A1
	Ship	Netherlands	1	Frigate
	LCA	USA	2	
	ACV	USA	120	

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TABLE 3: SELECTED WEAPONS IMPORTERS, ACCORDING TO SUPPLIER(continued)

Importer	Category	Exporter	# of Items	Comments
Israel	ACV	Romania	1	Reconnaissance ACV TABC-79
	ACV	USA	450	
	LCA	USA	6	
	Atk Helo	USA	4	
Malaysia	M/ML	France	2	IFV K-200
	ACV	Rep. of Korea	22	
	LCA	UK	3	
	Cbt acft	UK	24	
Mexico	ACV	Belgium	168	AMX-13
	ACV	Belgium	95	BDX
	ACV	USA	28	
Nigeria	ACV	France	42	Self-propelled guns 155/39, Palamaria
	LCA	Italy	2	
	Tank	UK	18	
Pakistan	Tank	China	82	Replenishment ship
	Ship	Netherlands	1	
	Atk helo	UK	2	
	Ship	UK	4	
Saudi Arabia	ACV	Canada	255	Wheeled APC
	Tank	USA	148	
Sweden	Tank	Germany	160	Leopard 2
	ACV	Germany	130	MT-LB
	ACV	Germany	7	MT-PLB
Thailand	Ship	China	1	Advanced jet trainer L-39 ZA
	Cbt acft	Czech Rep.	28	
	LCA	USA	20	
Turkey	LCA	Germany	131	Armored howitzer M-110
	Cbt acft	Germany	19	RF-4
	Ship	Germany	1	Submarine kit
	ACV	Romania	1	Armored combat vehicle 6x6
	ACV	USA	74	
	Atk helo	USA	1	
	Cbt acft	USA	25	
United Arab Emirates	Tank	France	5	
	M/ML	France	25	
	Cbt acft	UK	2	
	M/ML	UK	195	
Yemen	Tank	Bulgaria	6	T-55
	Tank	Bulgaria	56	T-62
	LCA	Bulgaria	10	166 Mine-Thrower (1933)
	LCA	Moldova	13	Multiple rocket launch system "Uragan"
	Cbt acft	Moldova	4	MIG-29 fighter aircraft

Source: BASIC, based on UN Register data

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APPENDIX B: STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE DATA

TABLE 1: LEADING EXPORTERS OF MAJOR CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

In millions of 1990 US dollars

		1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1990-94
1	United States	10,648	13,041	13,801	12,905	11,959	62,354
2	USSR/Russia	10,459	3,838	3,385	3,388	842	21,912
3	Germany, FR	1,656	2,505	1,487	1,726	3,162	10,536
4	United Kingdom	1,509	1,156	1,020	1,278	1,593	6,557
5	France	2,220	1,090	1,113	1,159	705	6,287
6	China	1,245	1,117	1,157	1,257	1,204	5,980
7	Other	3,154	2,780	2,813	2,781	2,260	13,788
	TOTAL	30,891	25,527	24,776	24,494	21,725	127,414

Source: BASIC, based on SIPRI Yearbook 1995

TABLE 2: LEADING IMPORTERS OF MAJOR CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

In millions of 1990 US dollars

		1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1990-94
1	Saudi Arabia	2,459	1,331	1,073	2,534	1,602	8,999
2	Japan	2,272	2,386	1,608	1,199	919	8,383
3	Turkey	804	954	1,640	2,281	2,135	7,814
4	Greece	1,221	568	2,732	881	973	6,375
5	India	1,599	1,494	1,166	966	773	5,998
6	Egypt	755	1,234	1,263	1,367	1,370	5,990
7	Germany, FR	1,084	1,005	1,267	1,202	629	5,187
8	Taiwan	553	867	416	974	1,069	3,878
9	Afghanistan	2,466	1,212	0	0	0	3,678
10	Israel	29	1,373	1,097	585	557	3,640
11	Pakistan	743	605	389	949	819	3,505
12	Iran	776	175	283	1,193	780	3,206
13	China	125	151	1,976	679	2	2,932
14	Canada	200	969	561	435	691	2,857
15	Spain	799	126	275	670	964	2,834
	Other	15,006	11,077	9,030	8,579	8,442	52,138
	TOTAL	30,891	25,527	24,776	24,494	21,725	127,414

Source: BASIC, based on SIPRI Yearbook 1995