
Appendix 1. The Guidelines for Conventional Arms Transfers, 1991

CLOSING COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE MEETING OF THE FIVE [PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL] ON ARMS SECURITY AND NON-PROLIFERATION, LONDON, 17–18 OCTOBER 1991

Guidelines for Conventional Arms Transfers, 18 October 1991

The People's Republic of China, the French Republic, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America,

– recalling and reaffirming the principles which they stated as a result of their meeting in Paris of 8 and 9 July 1991,

– mindful of the dangers to peace and stability posed by the transfer of conventional weapons beyond levels needed for defensive purposes,

– reaffirming the inherent right to individual or collective self-defense recognized in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, which implies that states have the right to acquire means of legitimate self-defense,

– recalling that in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, UN Member States have undertaken to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources,

– seeking to ensure that arms transferred are not used in violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter,

– mindful of their special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security,

– reaffirming their commitment to seek effective measures to promote peace, security, stability and arms control on a global and regional basis in a fair, reasonable, comprehensive and balanced manner,

– noting the importance of international commerce for peaceful purposes,

– determined to adopt a serious, responsible and prudent attitude of restraint regarding arms transfers, declare that,

when considering under their national control procedures conventional arms transfers, they intend to observe rules of restraint, and to act in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. They will consider carefully whether proposed transfers will:

(a) promote the capabilities of the recipient to meet needs for legitimate self-defense;

(b) serve as an appropriate and proportionate response to the security and military threats confronting the recipient country;

(c) enhance the capability of the recipient to participate in regional or other collective arrangements or other measures consistent with the Charter of the United Nations or requested by the United Nations.

2. They will avoid transfers which would be likely to:

(a) prolong or aggravate an existing armed conflict;

(b) increase tension in a region or contribute to regional instability;

(c) introduce destabilizing military capabilities in a region;

(d) contravene embargoes or other relevant internationally agreed restraints to which they are parties;

(e) be used other than for the legitimate defense and security needs of the recipient state;

(f) support or encourage international terrorism;

(g) be used to interfere with the internal affairs of sovereign states;

(h) seriously undermine the recipient state's economy.

Source: Disarmament, vol. xv, no. 1 (1992), pp. 162–63.
