

7. Why do Canada and the other Wassenaar members not control all exports to military customers?

The Wassenaar members, including Canada, recognize that by focusing on goods specially designed for military use, governments can control sales to all buyers. They can require potential exporters to provide information on how, and by whom, the goods would be used.

This emphasis also helps prevent civilians from “fronting” for armies, rebels, criminals or governments that would not be able to obtain such goods directly. This approach makes it possible for Wassenaar countries to minimize access to legitimate sources of supply of certain goods where concerns exist.

Wassenaar countries recognize that if they tried to regulate all the goods that military organizations buy, they would saddle legitimate sellers and buyers of non-strategic goods with an unreasonable paper burden. For example, Canadians sell an extremely wide range of goods, such as gasoline and oil, medical equipment, paper and food, to military organizations.

Controlling all sales to all military organizations would not help bring peace to the world, as it would not be possible to prevent civilian organizations from reselling goods to military buyers. It would hurt a legitimate world trade, as well as the employers and workers who produce those products, and governments are not prepared to erect such wide-ranging barriers to trade in commercial goods.

The other countries that work within the Wassenaar Arrangement support the emphasis on controlling key goods, regardless of buyer, rather than controlling buyers, regardless of goods.