

government makes a distinction between equipment that will be used for defensive purposes and other military equipment. Licenses are also not granted for export to a state where the equipment may be presumed to be used to suppress human rights.

France

Sales of military products in France are carefully regulated on a case by case basis by an interdepartmental committee of representatives from defence, finance and the economy departments. France views arms sales as an important aspect of foreign policy and only refuses exports to the Warsaw Pact. Certain principles of restraint have been developed by French governments since 1955. These include restricting exports to war zones and countries where arms may be used for internal oppression. However, these principles are not law and are not closely adhered to. French governments publish very little on the size or direction of their arms flows and have tended to discourage public discussion of the issue.

The United Kingdom

Decision-making on arms sales is made by an Arms Working Party made up of representatives of a number of ministries and chaired by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Sensitive cases may be referred to the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee of the cabinet. There is no comprehensive overall policy and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Arms sales in the United Kingdom have been the subject of public debate and considerable attention has been given, particularly by the Labour Party, to the question of undertaking a conversion of defence industries to civilian industries. In the early 1980s several British companies made an effort to diversify their production into civilian areas.

Current Situation

There are two main public sources of information that provide the kind of data on arms transfers that would be included in an international registry. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) annually publishes extensive information on the world trade in conventional arms, including a breakdown of major weapons systems on order or under delivery for that year. The US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency also provides an annual report of world wide military transfers and expenditures.