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Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) 25th Anniversary

Fact Sheet

BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND NONPROLIFERATION

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Formed by the (then) G-7 industrialized countries in 1987, the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) is an informal political understanding among states that seek to limit the proliferation of missiles and related technology; it is not a treaty. Since its creation, 27 additional countries have joined the MTCR, and many other countries have adhered unilaterally to the MTCR Guidelines or otherwise control exports of MTCR Annex items.

Originally focused on restricting exports of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles and related technology, the Regime expanded its scope in 1993 to cover unmanned delivery systems capable of carrying all types of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) -- chemical, biological, and nuclear. In 2002, the MTCR Partners (members) made terrorism an explicit focus of the Regime. Both of those steps were in direct support of the WMD nonproliferation objectives of the Biological Weapons Convention, Chemical Weapons Convention, and Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

The MTCR seeks to limit the risks of proliferation of WMD by controlling transfers that could make a contribution to delivery systems (other than manned aircraft) for such weapons. More broadly, the MTCR Guidelines (export control policies) and Annex (list of export-controlled items) have become the international standard for responsible missile-related export behavior. The MTCR and its Annex were implicitly endorsed in UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540 of 2004, which affirms that the proliferation of WMD delivery means constitutes a threat to international peace and security and requires all UN Member States to establish domestic controls against such proliferation. The MTCR Annex also forms the basis of the list of missile-related items prohibited from being transferred to Iran under UNSCRs 1737 and 1929, and to North Korea under UNSCR 1718.

Over the course of the Regime's 25-year history, the efforts of MTCR member countries have reduced the number of countries possessing missiles capable of delivering WMD, the global inventory of such missiles, and the number of countries interested in acquiring such missiles. The establishment by MTCR member and adherent countries of missile-related export controls has significantly reduced the availability to proliferators of support from the countries possessing the most and best technology. The export controls, information-sharing, and patterns of cooperation fostered by the MTCR also have resulted in the interdiction of numerous shipments of equipment intended for missile programs of concern. All of these measures have made it more difficult, time-consuming, and costly for proliferators to produce or acquire WMD capable missiles.

As it has done since 1987, the United States will continue to work through the MTCR to reduce the global missile proliferation threat by restraining the missile-related exports of an expanding number of countries and by increasing the pressure on proliferators to abandon their missile programs. The United States continues to encourage all non-member countries to support the MTCR's efforts and to unilaterally abide by MTCR standards in the interest of international peace and security.

The MTCR currently has 34 members: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

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