Philip Griffiths

Head of the Wassenaar Arrangement Secretariat

As global trade in defence equipment continues to increase and new players and technologies enter the market, shaping the rules and regulations for the transfer of equipment is a complex task.

"In terms of both national security and commercial interests, it is vital that the Wassenaar Arrangement [WA] list specifications are set precisely to focus export licensing decisions on items of security concern while allowing other items to be traded freely," Philip Griffiths, Head of the Wassenaar Arrangement's Secretariat, told *Jane's*.

The WA is an intergovernmental information-sharing and standard-setting forum focused on export controls for conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies.

The organisation is continuously developing and reviewing its munitions and dual-use lists, with goods and technology definitions emerging from intense review by participating state experts. Described by Griffiths as an "iterative process", there are typically 80-90 proposals annually from national participants for changes to controls.

Currently, there are 41 states that participate in the WA system, with the organisation operating an outreach programme to share its experience in export control regulation and to promote effective export control systems. According to Griffiths, more non-WA countries are basing their export controls on the WA's work without seeking to join the group, while several applications for membership are also under consideration.

In addition to the WA system, the organisation seeks to complement other multilateral control regimes such as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). According to Griffiths, the WA is pursuing a "regular technical-level dialogue" with these groups, which is "intended to optimise use of national expertise and avoid duplication or ambiguities in their respective controls".

Alongside the technical discussions between participating states, Griffiths said that other multilateral agreements such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), have helped to raise the profile of export controls and highlight the need for regulation of the sector.

"I believe that the WA and the ATT can

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'Vigilance will continue to be required, given the fast evolution of technologies with potential military implications'

be seen as complementary and mutually reinforcing. WA participating states welcomed the ATT's adoption in 2013," Griffiths explained to *Jane's*.

"It seems logical that the accumulated work of the WA, including its munitions list and the implementation guidelines and best practices, may be useful to other countries seeking to meet their ATT commitments," he added.

The constant changes in both the military and dual-use technological environments are a key challenge for the organisation, according to Griffiths.

"The WA control lists continue to grow in the dual-use area in particular, where participating states increasingly see the WA as the appropriate forum in which to address emerging technologies of concern," he said. "It is significant that new technologies with military potential, traditionally driven by defence industries, are increasingly being developed by the civilian sector and then used for military applications.

"Control parameters are modified to take account of broad civil applications reflecting the evolution of the market," he added. "This is particularly the case for high-performance computers and electronic components."

The historical risks surrounding conventional arms transfers still remain, he cautioned, while the increasing globalisation of business, movement of people, and ever-widening use of electronic communications add to the regulation challenges.

"In recent years the WA has introduced new controls for mobile communications interception equipment, cyber threats, and internet surveillance systems, and refined controls for unmanned aerial vehicles and spacecraft, among others," he said. "In some cases further review is under way to ensure that the controls do not hinder the development of industry expertise."

Griffiths highlighted that "particular vigilance will continue to be required, given the fast evolution of technologies with potential military implications.

There are a number of long-running challenges within the current global security climate that remain a concern for WA participating states. For example, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, along with manportable air defence systems. In addition to the changing security environment, terrorist attacks in a number of member countries are driving attention towards the strengthening of standards concerning small arms. The threat is not limited to terrorism, according to Griffiths, with illicit trade and secondary markets also driving concerns over the spread of small arms.

Griffiths noted that technology transfers, industrial participation, and defence-industrial offsets are also receiving attention from the WA organisation.

"Both the WA munitions and dual-use control lists include specific definitions and controls for technology. The challenge remains at the implementation level, in particular when it comes to monitoring and controlling intangible transfers of technology. While most WA participating states have specific regulations covering intangible transfers, national practices may differ," he explained.

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