

## Review of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and its Implementation Guidelines

- The transfer of defense equipment and technology is a key policy instrument to create a desirable security environment. Cases in which transfer is permitted have expanded through revisions of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and its Implementation Guidelines. Efforts are progressing steadily under the current National Security Strategy.
- On the other hand, regarding the restriction limiting transfer of finished products to five categories (rescue, transport, warning, surveillance, and minesweeping), discussions for review were held after the current National Security Strategy was issued in 2022, however, no conclusion was reached under the LDP-Komeito administration, leaving it as an unresolved issue. In line with the LDP-Japan Innovation Party coalition agreement made in October 2025 and the ruling parties' March 2026 proposal, the Government of Japan will review the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and its Implementation Guidelines as shown below.

### [Significance of this review]

Defense equipment transfer is an indispensable policy instrument for ensuring national security and protecting the lives, freedom, and right to the pursuit of happiness of Japanese citizens. To this end, the following two points are specifically stipulated in the Three Principles.

- Under the increasingly severe security environment of recent years, greater importance lies in reinforcing the deterrence and response capabilities of Japan's ally and like-minded countries through promoting the transfer of defense equipment and technology. Possessing the same equipment as our ally and like-minded countries and sharing production and maintenance bases with them will enable us to build an environment for providing mutual support.
- Given the increasing importance of ensuring persistent warfare capabilities, promoting the transfer of defense equipment and technology holds great significance in securing the domestic production capacity to underpin the persistent warfare capabilities in the event of a contingency.

### [Key elements regarding this review]

- After this review, the transfer of all finished products (e.g., fighter aircraft, escort ships, submarines), parts and technology and the provision of repair and other services may be permitted in principle. (While the transfer of all these equipments may be theoretically permitted in principle, each case will be examined individually, in the same manner employed by other major nations.)
- With regard to arms under the Self-Defense Forces Act in particular, the Government will conduct stricter examinations of individual cases and ensure appropriate control after the transfer takes place.

# Details of the review

## [Restricting recipients in line with the characteristics of the equipment]

Recipients will be restricted as set out below, in accordance with whether or not the equipment has the capacity to kill or wound people or destroy objects.

(1) "**Non-Arms\***" (= has no capacity to kill or wound people or destroy objects): no restrictions placed on recipients

\*Equipment that does not fall under the category of Arms.

(2) "**Arms**" (= has the capacity to kill or wound people or destroy objects): recipients are limited to countries that have concluded an international agreement obligating the use of transferred defense equipment and technology in a manner consistent with the Charter of the United Nations\*. In principle, transfer is not permitted to a country where combat is currently deemed to be taking place as part of an armed conflict; permission may be granted as an exceptional case when there are special circumstances in consideration of the need in terms of Japan's security.

\*At present, Japan has concluded defense equipment and technology transfer agreements with 17 countries (U.S., U.K., Australia, India, Philippines, France, Germany, Malaysia, Italy, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Thailand, Sweden, Singapore, UAE, Mongolia, Bangladesh).

## [Conducting stricter examinations when transferring "Arms" and ensuring appropriate control]

(1) Swift **notification to the Diet** upon a decision to permit transfer being taken at the National Security Council and published (to be stipulated in the Three Principles)

(2) Expansion of elements to be examined (besides "the impact on international peace and security" and so on, newly add "the security environment of the country or region of destination," "the export control system of the country or region of destination," "Japan's security environment," "the impact on Japan's defense buildup and SDF operations")

(3) Reinforcement of the system for **monitoring the status of control after transfer occurs** (confirming the "Arms" control status, protective measures, essential response measures in case of loss, etc.)

# Framework for controlling transfers through the Implementation Guidelines (After review)

Classification of equipment			Recipient (Countries cooperating with Japan in security area)		Examination procedure
				Transfer to a "country where combat is currently deemed to be taking place as part of an armed conflict"	
Finished products	Non-Arms		○ (○ indicates "no limitations on recipients"; the same applies hereinafter)	○	NSC board (Cases requiring careful consideration are taken up at the NSC Four Ministers meeting; the same applies hereinafter)
	Arms		Countries with which Japan has concluded a defense equipment and technology transfer agreement	× (Transfer possible in exceptional cases)	NSC Four Ministers meeting
International joint development and production	Transfer to partner countries	Non-Arms	Partner countries	○	NSC board
		Arms	Partner countries	○	NSC Four Ministers meeting
	Transfer to third parties	Non-Arms	○	○	NSC board
		Arms	Countries with which Japan has concluded a defense equipment and technology transfer agreement	× (Transfer possible in exceptional cases)	NSC Four Ministers meeting
		GCAP	Countries with which Japan has concluded a defense equipment and technology transfer agreement	×	NSC Four Ministers meeting + Cabinet approval
Licensed products	Transfer to the license provider country	Non-Arms	License provider country	○	NSC board
		Arms	License provider country	○	NSC Four Ministers meeting
	Transfer to third parties	Non-Arms	○	○	NSC board
		Arms	○	× (Transfer possible in exceptional cases)	NSC Four Ministers meeting
Parts			○	○	NSC board

# Framework for controlling transfers through the Implementation Guidelines (Before review)

Classification of equipment		Recipient (Countries cooperating with Japan in security area)			Examination procedure
		Transfer to a "country where combat is currently deemed to be taking place as part of an armed conflict"			
Finished products	Non-Arms	Non-Five Categories			
		Five Categories	○ (○ indicates "no limitations on recipients"; the same applies hereinafter)	○	NSC board (Cases requiring careful consideration are taken up at the NSC Four Ministers meeting; the same applies hereinafter)
	Arms		○	○	NSC Four Ministers meeting
		Non-Five Categories			
International joint development and production	Transfer to partner countries	Non-Arms	Partner countries	○	NSC board
		Arms	Partner countries	○	NSC Four Ministers meeting
	Transfer to third parties	Non-Arms			
		Arms	GCAP Countries with which Japan has concluded a defense equipment and technology transfer agreement	×	NSC Four Ministers meeting + Cabinet approval
Licensed products	Transfer to the license provider country	Non-Arms	License provider country	○	NSC board
		Arms	License provider country	○	NSC Four Ministers meeting
	Transfer to third parties	Non-Arms	○	○	NSC board
		Arms	○	× (Transfer possible in exceptional cases)	NSC Four Ministers meeting
Parts		○	○	NSC board	4