MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR ACQUISITION,
TECHNOLOGY AND LOGISTICS
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR INTELLIGENCE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR NETWORKS
AND INFORMATION INTEGRATION
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION
AGENCY
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE TECHNOLOGY SECURITY
ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: Establishment of Department of Defense Senior Steering Group (SSG) on
Arms Transfer and Technology Release

To build the capacity of allies and coalition partners, the Department must make
timely decisions that advance our political-military objectives, but it must protect critical
technology from diversion to potential adversaries. The Department will establish an
SSG on Arms Transfer and Technology Release to provide direction to the various
processes within the Department involved in approving the transfer of armaments and the
release of classified and sensitive technology to international partners.

Several separate, but related, processes support these decisions. These processes
include the National Disclosure Policy Committee, the Low-Observable/Counter-Low
Observable Executive Committee, the Committee on National Security Systems, the
Defensive Systems Committee, and DoD's export licensing process. Additionally, each
of the Military Departments has its own internal review processes for determining the
transfer of capabilities and technologies within its purview.

The SSG will perform several key functions. First, the group will be the
overarching formal mechanism to ensure clear, policy-level direction is appropriately
considered in technology release processes. Failure to do so can prevent the Department
from complying with interagency and international commitments, made often at the
presidential or cabinet level. Additionally, the SSG should serve a role in ensuring that
technology protection and release considerations are included in the very first discussions
of export weapons systems and that initial visibility into possible export proposals is
shared among all key stakeholders. Second, the SSG will serve in an ombudsman role as
necessary, providing a forum to discuss and shape the competing interests inherent in the desire to tightly protect certain critical technologies against balancing risk to those technologies with the operational interests of coalition partners. Finally, the SSG should recommend improvements to the processes individually, and collectively, using Continual Process Improvement/Lean Six Sigma methodologies, consistent with the Department’s initiative.

The SSG will be co-chaired by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, and it will include appropriate representation from the addressees’ organizations. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Global Security Affairs) and the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Industrial Policy) will co-chair the SSG Working Group.

While the SSG will develop a mutually agreed work plan as its first task, the co-chairs are to provide an interim report on their progress within 60 days of the date of this memorandum.