

Principles of Verification

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In 1988 the UN General Assembly endorsed the following 16 principles of verification, which were developed by the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC). Every two years, the principles are re-endorsed by the General Assembly in a resolution that is sponsored by Canada, and which is normally adopted by consensus.

UN Principles of Verification

- Adequate and effective verification is an essential element of all arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Verification is not an aim in itself, but an essential element in the process of achieving arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Verification should promote the implementation of arms limitation and disarmament measures, build confidence among states and ensure that agreements are being observed by all parties.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Adequate and effective verification requires employment of different techniques, such as national technical means, international technical means and international procedures, including on-site inspections.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Verification in the arms limitation and disarmament process will benefit from greater openness.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Arms limitation and disarmament agreements should include explicit provisions whereby each party undertakes not to interfere with the agreed methods, procedures and techniques of verification, when these are operating in a manner consistent with the provisions of the agreement and generally recognized principles of international law.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Arms limitation and disarmament agreements should include explicit provisions whereby each party undertakes not to use deliberate concealment measures which impede verification of compliance with the agreement.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- To assess the continuing adequacy and effectiveness of the verification system, an arms limitation and disarmament agreement should provide for procedures and mechanisms for review and evaluation. Where possible, time-frames for such reviews should be agreed in order to facilitate this assessment.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Verification arrangements should be addressed at the outset and at every stage of negotiations on specific arms limitation and disarmament agreements.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- All states have equal rights to participate in the process of international verification of agreements to which they are parties.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Adequate and effective verification arrangements must be capable of providing, in a timely fashion, clear and convincing evidence of compliance or non-compliance. Continued confirmation of compliance is an essential ingredient to building and maintaining confidence among the parties.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Determinations about the adequacy, effectiveness and acceptability of specific methods and arrangements intended to verify compliance with the provisions of an arms limitation and disarmament agreement can only be made within the context of that agreement.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Verification of compliance with obligations imposed by an arms limitation and disarmament agreement is an activity conducted by the parties to an arms limitation and disarmament agreement or by an organization at the request and with the explicit consent of the parties, and is an expression of the sovereign right of states to enter into such arrangements.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Requests for inspections or information in accordance with the provisions of an arms limitation and disarmament agreement, should be considered as a normal component of the verification process. Such requests should be used only for the purposes of the determination of compliance, care being taken to avoid abuses.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- Verification arrangements should be implemented without discrimination, and, in accomplishing their purpose, avoid unduly interfering with the internal affairs of state parties or other states, or jeopardizing their economic, technological and social development.

UN Principles of Verification, Cont.

- To be adequate and effective, a verification regime for an agreement must cover all relevant weapons, facilities, locations, installations and activities.