

THE
CARTER CENTER



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To the Nobel Peace Laureates

Although I am unable to be with you in New York for the public unveiling of the International Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers, I want to express my support for the Code of Conduct that you have proposed, and for its goals, principles, and implementation mechanisms.

Your individual and collective efforts to establish specific standards of behavior for the transfer of all classes of arms and military technology constitute a critically important step toward defining moral benchmarks which all countries in the world can and should strive to meet.

As you may know, last month The Carter Center's Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government convened a Consultation of political leaders and experts from throughout the Americas to consider some of the major issues in hemispheric affairs, including trade, drugs, arms restraint, corruption, and Cuba. At the close of the Consultation, the group issued a Final Statement and recommendations, including a request that governments in the region sign an International Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers. Former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias played a key role in formulating this and other Council proposals on security and democracy.

I would like to ask if you would lend your support to another Council recommendation that emerged from the Consultation in Atlanta: that the governments of Latin America pledge to accept a moratorium of two years before purchasing any sophisticated weapons, and that during this time they should explore ideas to negotiate a regional arms restraint agreement.

Our proposals for an International Code of Conduct and for a two-year moratorium on the acquisition of sophisticated arms, are, of course, complementary and mutually-reinforcing, and if accepted, would give governments confidence to negotiate arms restraint agreements.

Sincerely,