

Govt to treat equally defence companies, desi & foreign, making in India

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NEW DELHI: India will stop importing weapons in the coming years, but will not differentiate between domestic companies and foreign arms majors that set up production facilities in the country, a senior defence ministry official said on Wednesday.

Towards this end to promote self-reliance, the ministry of defence has scrapped proposed foreign deals close to Rs 60,000 crore worth of 'Buy-Global' cases in the last four to five months, additional secretary (defence production) Sanjay Jaju said at a seminar organised by industry chamber PHDCCI. India is saddled with the strategically-vulnerable position of being the world's largest arms importer. As long as foreign OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) are in India, and as long as they are designing and manufacturing within the country, the Indian government is

completely equitable, said Jaju.

"I have friends from global OEMs like Lockheed Martin sitting right here. It is not a commentary on foreign OEMs because we are ownership agnostic now... India does not differentiate between foreign OEMs and L&Ts (domestic companies) of the world. For us, all of you are equal," Jaju said.

"All our policies are designed in a manner in which all of you get equal opportunities. But one point that is now coming is that going forward, possibly we will not be importing anything. One can say that at the outset," he said. "A little bit of a difficult situation for the Lockheeds (foreign OEMs) of the world but I think you can substitute it with a string of projects... To design and develop the systems within our country," he added.