

Firearms and Ammunition Exports to Canada

Background:

The New York Times reports that the U.S. has ordered a suspension of firearms and ammunition exports to Canada. This is incorrect. A recent review of export license applications revealed Canadian requests for a very large number of firearms (rifles, pistols, and revolvers) and rounds of ammunition. Even though most of the export requests were ostensibly for Canadian government use and law enforcement (mostly the Royal Canadian Mounted Police), the exorbitant volume of weapons being sought raised questions. When State Department licensing authorities brought this to visiting Canadian authorities that handle export control issues, it was agreed that the cases needed to be reviewed. The Canadians provided a letter to State to hold issuance of further orders for large amounts of guns and ammunition, until they had the opportunity to clarify the requirements of such. Final action on such cases is being held in abeyance, but no formal restrictions or embargo has been put in place.

Question:

Is it true that the U.S. Government has taken an action against Canada that prohibits further exports of firearms and ammunition? Is this related to the April 12, 1999 amendment of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) that restricted U.S. defense equipment and technology that can be exported to Canada without a munitions license?

Answer:

- There is no "action against Canada" regarding U.S. exports of firearms and ammunition,
- As a part of normal consultations between the two countries, we are jointly looking into some inconsistencies that have been identified regarding firearms and ammunition imported into Canada from the U.S.
- The U.S. has not come to any conclusions, including whether there is a problem of any kind.

- We are continuing to process a number of export licenses that have been requested by the Government of Canada and deferring others until we and Canadian authorities are satisfied with the details under review.
- While the April 1999 amendment to the ITAR required licensing of firearms and ammunition to Canada (in adherence to the OAS "model regulations" on controlling firearms and ammunition that all Western Hemispheric states have agreed to support), the issues under discussion are unrelated to that ITAR amendment.

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