

*Government Orders*

important, foreign markets to which Canadian foreign policy would permit access.

The government proposes to resolve this anomaly by adopting the amendments proposed under Bill C-6; negotiating a bilateral defence research, development and production agreement with Saudi Arabia; and including Saudi Arabia on the Automatic Firearms Country Control List.

The export of the LAVs has been reviewed and again approved—after all licensing requirements were met and after careful review and study. In doing so, particular attention was given to the requirement to control closely exports of military goods to countries “threatened by or engaged in hostilities”. In the end, it was decided to approve GM’s application.

A primary consideration was that the results of the Gulf War ensured that Saudi Arabia is not now, nor, in the immediate future will it be, an imminent threat of hostilities. Another was that the export of the LAVs by Canada to Saudi Arabia will not threaten Saudi Arabia’s neighbours and will serve to enhance regional security.

Saudi Arabia has a legitimate right to self-defence. Its requirement for LAVs armed with automatic weapons is reasonable given its need to maintain a defensive military capability sufficient to continue to deter aggression. The LAVs are lightly armoured. Even when armed with automatic machine guns and cannons, they are designed for and have a particular military use, such as patrolling the oil fields, the oil pipelines and other strategic sites. Because of their light armour, the LAVs are not as effective in an offensive role for which heavily armoured and heavily armed vehicles such as main battle tanks are best suited.

Moreover, Saudi Arabia shares with Canada and with other members of the allied coalition, a commonality of interests in supporting the UN Security Council resolutions and in strengthening regional security arrangements. It is currently working closely with other states in the region, and with members of the coalition, to develop appropriate regional security arrangements for the post conflict period. These efforts are fully supported by Canada.

The requirement to control exports of military goods, including automatic firearms, is clear and obvious. The

Export and Import Permits Act provides the government with the necessary means to do so. Enforcement of controls requires vigilance, intelligence, and close international co-operation. It also requires the support of exporters and clear licensing guidelines. The 1977 amendments to the Criminal Code place unnecessary restrictions on Canadian companies established to support Canada’s defence requirements. Our NATO allies can export automatic firearms to Canadian forces, but Canadian firms cannot export to meet their requirements for the same goods.

Adoption of the proposed amendments to the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code are necessary and pertain only to automatic firearms. The amendments do not pertain to other military equipment, nor do they alter Canada’s longstanding policy on stringently controlling exports of military goods.

The new, additional and strict controls on exports of automatic firearms were developed to meet a specific and limited requirement of the Canadian defence industry. Increased flexibility in certain areas is being created only with respect to a single category of military goods, namely automatic firearms. Other export controls remain in place. Adoption of the automatic firearms country control list and limiting exports of automatic weapons to our NATO allies and close defence partners, to those countries with which we have bilateral defence research, development and production agreements, will help ensure that Canadian manufacturers of automatic weapons and equipment with automatic firearms remain viable. They will also ensure that Canadian controls on such goods remain the most stringent in the world.

These exacting Canadian controls reflect the government’s commitment to arms control. They are fully consistent with recent Canadian arms controls initiatives including the proposal to hold a world summit on the instruments of war and weapons of mass destruction. They are also consistent with the program of action on conventional weapons.

Canada’s concern is the build-up by certain countries of levels of armaments in excess of legitimate self-defence requirements. Certainly no permit would ever be approved to export automatic weapons from Canada to a country which undertook such a massive build-up of arms. It simply would not happen. If a country with