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What are Canada's export control policy guidelines for military goods?

Canadian policy respects industry's right to sell its goods to legitimate customers around the world, unless there are sound reasons otherwise. This is consistent with the perspective of all other trading countries.

Canada closely controls the export of military goods and technology to countries that:

- pose a threat to Canada and its allies;
- are involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities;
- are under United Nations Security Council sanctions; or
- have governments that have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population.

In June 1996, the Minister of Foreign Affairs instructed the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to be even more rigorous in taking security, regional stability and human rights considerations into account when analysing export permit applications. The Minister also underlined the need to apply strict screening procedures to minimize the risk that Canadian firearms exports could fall into the hands of people who might use them to fuel the illegal arms trade or increase local lawlessness or violence.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has chosen to personally review applications involving potential exports of offensive military goods and technologies, unless they are going to a NATO ally or to a small group of other countries with which Canada has similarly close relations. In the case of non-offensive military goods and technology, the Minister is consulted if any of the conditions listed above apply.

Canada has a distinct set of controls over automatic firearms exports. Automatic firearms, such as assault rifles, can only be sent to a small group of 13 countries (the Automatic Firearms Country Control List) with which Canada has negotiated reciprocal defence, research, development and production agreements.