

Canadian export controls are among the most restrictive of all Western countries, particularly with respect to the transfer of arms.

A standard review process exists for the proposed export of military equipment to any destination, except to members of the NATO alliance and a handful of other countries, including Australia, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland.

All proposals to export military goods or technology to a country aside from those just noted are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Departments of National Defence and Industry, Science and Technology, as well as extensively within External Affairs and International Trade Canada.

The export of offensive military equipment requires my own personal review and approval. The export of non-offensive military equipment requires my review and approval if the country of destination is engaged in or is under imminent threat of hostilities, has a record of human rights abuses, is under United Nations sanctions, or is deemed to be a threat to Canada and its allies.

These amendments do not affect this review process, which remains in place and in fact will be extended to cover any proposal to export automatic firearms. All other controls provided for under the Export and Import Permit Act remain unchanged.

In conclusion, as Secretary of State for External Affairs, I am responsible for developing and implementing Canada's arms control and disarmament policies. I am also responsible for issuing permits under the Export and Import Permits Act.

I will continue to ensure that all of our military exports -- including any as a result of the proposed amendments to the Act -- are fully consistent with our arms control and disarmament policies and do not contribute to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or to excessive build-ups of conventional arms.