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NEWS



For Immediate Release

FY-89-31  
July 7, 1989

ATF DETERMINES SEMIAUTOMATIC ASSAULT RIFLES CANNOT BE  
IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED STATES

Washington -- Stephen E. Higgins, Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) announced today that imported firearms classified as semiautomatic assault rifles do not meet statutory requirements and will be banned from entry into the United States.

This action, which is being taken under the Gun Control Act of 1968, will make permanent the temporary suspension on many of the imported semiautomatic rifles that ATF identified for review last March and April.

The decision follows a 3-month comprehensive study and analysis conducted by ATF. "The study was undertaken because of the dramatic increase in the number of these weapons being imported and police reports of their use in violent crime," Higgins said.

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DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY  
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

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BARRED FROM IMPORTATION:

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| AK47 type                         | 86S type                           |
| AK47S type                        | 86S7 type                          |
| AK74 type                         | 87S type                           |
| AKS type                          | Galil type                         |
| AKM type                          | Type 56 type                       |
| AKMS type                         | Type 56S type                      |
| 84S type                          | Valmet M76 type                    |
| ARM type                          | Valmet M78 type                    |
| 84S1 type                         | M76 counter sniper type            |
| 84S3 type                         | FAL type                           |
| HK91 type                         | L1A1A type                         |
| HK93 type                         | SAR 48 type                        |
| HK94 type                         | AUG type                           |
| G3SA type                         | FNC type                           |
| K1 type                           | Uzi carbine                        |
| K2 type                           | Algimec AGMI type                  |
| AR100 type                        | AR180 type                         |
| M14S type                         | Australian Automatic Arms SAR type |
| MAS223 type                       | Beretta AR70 type                  |
| SIG 550SP type                    | Beretta BM59 type                  |
| SIG 551SP type                    | CIS SR88 type                      |
| SKS type with detachable magazine |                                    |

ALLOWED FOR IMPORTATION:

- AK22 type
- AP74 type
- Galil/22 type
- M16/22 type
- Unique F11 type
- Erma EM1.22 type
- Valmet Hunter ( Considered as one of AK-47 type during suspension)

## FACT SHEET

### Introduction

Last spring the import of several different types of semiautomatic rifles was suspended pending a study by ATF on whether these weapons are, as the law requires, of a type generally recognized as particularly suitable for, or readily adaptable to, sporting purposes. Based on three criteria: the firearm has a military appearance, accepts a large capacity magazine and is a semiautomatic version of a machinegun, ATF suspended action on pending applications and outstanding permits requesting authority to import over 700,000 semiautomatic assault rifles. This is a number over seven times higher than actual imports of this same type of weapon in the previous year.

### Background

With the passage of the Gun Control Act of 1968, ATF developed guidelines for "sporting purposes" for handguns. At that time, handguns were perceived as the critical issue. Other than surplus military firearms, which Congress addressed separately, longguns being imported prior to 1968 were generally conventional rifles and shotguns specifically intended for sporting purposes.

### Definition of Sporting Purposes

The first time ATF undertook a specific analysis of the "sporting purposes" with respect to rifles and shotguns

was in 1984, when importation of the Striker-12 shotgun was denied. It was clear that the assumption that all shotguns were sporting was no longer viable. The importer gave information that the Striker-12, a weapon initially designed in South Africa for riot control, was also suitable for police combat-style competitions. ATF then made the determination that this type of competition did not constitute "sporting purposes" under the law and the gun was not permitted for import. Again in 1986, ATF faced the same situation with the USAS-12 and again denied the import. In both cases ATF interpreted "sporting" as being limited to certain traditional sports and not simply any lawful activity in which the weapons could be used. ATF was sued in the USAS-12 case. The court upheld ATF, and the decision is under appeal.

The legislative history indicates the term "sporting purposes" refers to traditional sports such as target shooting, skeet and trap shooting and hunting. There is nothing in the law to indicate the term "sporting purposes" was intended to recognize every conceivable type of activity or competition which might employ a firearm.

Summary

In taking an intensive look at the firearms themselves, ATF studied the available literature, made a technical evaluation of the weapons, conducted a wide-ranging comprehensive survey and concluded there were viable, clear differences between semiautomatic assault rifles and semiautomatic rifles used in traditional sports. The semiautomatic assault rifles in question represent a distinctive type of rifle characterized by certain military features which distinguish them from the traditional sporting rifle.

In accordance with the statute, ATF's determination has application only to imported firearms.

On Friday, June 30, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit upheld ATF's temporary suspension of the semiautomatic assault rifles in the Gun South case.

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