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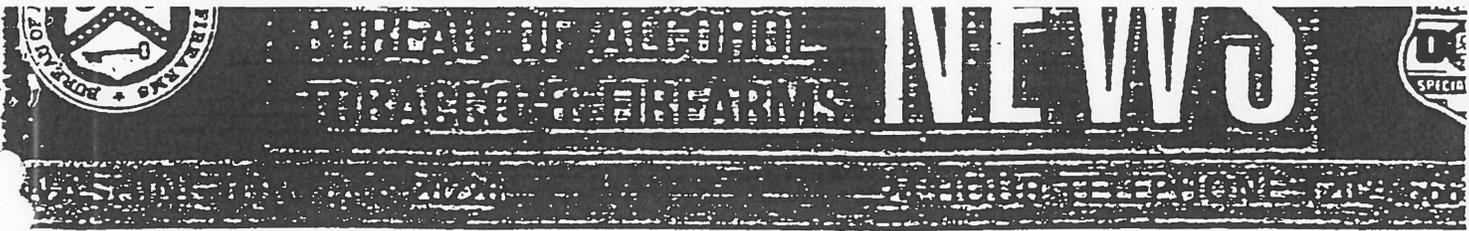
ATF DETERMINES SEMIAUTOMATIC ASSAULT RIFLES CANNOT BE
IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED STATES

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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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)

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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

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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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