



Senators Feinstein, Leahy, Akaka Introduce Bill to  
Curb International Small Arms Sales  
July 13, 2004

**Washington, DC** – Senators Dianne Feinstein (*D-Calif.*), Patrick Leahy (*D-Vt.*), and Daniel Akaka (*D-Hawaii*) have introduced legislation to address the growing threat of small arms and light weapons.

**“The proliferation of small arms and light weapons threaten peace and stability around the world,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“From Afghanistan to Bosnia, and Rwanda to Haiti, these weapons kill innocent civilians, undermine economic growth and harm U.S. national security interests. With hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops deployed around the world in peacekeeping and security operations, small arms and light weapons directly threaten the lives of our American military personnel. It is incumbent upon this Congress and this Administration to do everything in its power and use every tool at our disposal to protect our troops.”**

There are an estimated 639 million firearms in circulation around the world. Each year 300,000 people are killed by these small arms – a majority of those killed are civilians.

States including Afghanistan and Iraq have become a haven for these weapons. Over ten million small arms and light weapons were collected during the Taliban’s rise to power in Afghanistan and significantly contributed to that state becoming a refuge for terrorists and a threat to U.S. national security interests. In Iraq, news reports indicate that there are more than 50 inadequately-secured weapons sites which contain 650,000 tons of rifles, missiles, ammunition, and other war material.

The legislation introduced on July 8 by Senators Feinstein, Leahy and Akaka would:

- express the Sense of Congress that the United States should enter into negotiations for comprehensive international agreements on small arms;
- urge the President to conclude an international agreement on the marking of small arms and light weapons for international export;
- call on the President to implement the Program of Action of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and require a report on its implementation;
- affirm U.S. policy to maintain the highest standards for the management and transfer of small arms and light weapons exports, and that it is U.S. policy to refrain from exports

that could be used in internal repression, human rights abuses and international aggression;

- require the President to report to Congress on the grant of any license for the export of small arms and light weapons in the amount of \$1 million or less to a country where there is a clear risk the article will be used to commit human rights abuses;
- direct the President to establish and maintain a registry of the serial numbers of small arms and light weapons that require a license for international export; and,
- require a report from the Secretary of State on states who have not cooperated in programs related to small arms and light weapons.

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