P.S. to the NEWS
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LAWSUIT TO DISCOVER TECHNOLOGY SHIPMENTS

Would you believe that, if U.S. firms were to build a giant truck-manufacturing plant for the Russians, they could be relied on to build only civilian trucks and not military trucks? The average American would probably answer "don't be ridiculous," but the Commerce Department trusted the Soviets, and several years ago approved the sale of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of machine tools, computers, foundries, and industrial designs to build the largest truck factory in the world on the Kama River, 500 miles east of Moscow.

Central Intelligence Agency official Hans Heymann testified in May at a closed hearing of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Research and Development that the Kama River plant is turning out military trucks and other military vehicles such as armored personel carriers and assault vehicles. The plant will produce 70,000 trucks of all kinds this year. When completely built, it will turn out 150,000 trucks and 250,000 engines a year.

At another hearing a week later, Lawrence J. Brady, director of the Office of Export Administration, told the same subcommittee that the government's system of export controls is "a total shambles." He said it is impossible for the Carter Administration to ensure that the advanced technology equipment we ship to the Soviet Union is not diverted to military uses.

Brady said that the Carter Administration last year denied only 200 to 300 sales to Soviet bloc nations out of a total of more than 7,000 applications. He said that the Commerce Department supported almost every export license requested, and only denied those few because of Pentagon objections. Brady added, "the system is in really bad shape. We have a larger backlog of cases than we've ever had and we're getting more in."

This is the same Lawrence Brady who on July 13, 1977, denied a request by syndicated columnist M. Stanton Evans to identify which U.S. firms have received

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licenses to export to the Soviet Union and for what products. Evans appealed from Brady's decision to Commerce Secretary Juanita Kreps, who denied his request claiming that applications for export licenses are covered by a "confidentiality provision" of the Export Administration Act of 1969.

Secretary Kreps gave an additional reason: to release the information would "expose many of these firms to adverse business and other pressures by various individuals and groups that disagree with the government's decision to authorize them to export certain commodities or to certain destinations such as the Soviet Union." That's probably the real reason; the Carter Administration is in cahoots with certain large businesses to provide U.S. technology to the Russians in the name of detente, and they don't want the American public spoiling their plans by demanding enforcement of the law against shipping strategic materials to the Soviets.

Evans has now filed suit against Secretary Kreps and the Commerce Department to force the release of precise information about the goods, technologies and designs which American firms are shipping to the Soviet Union, the companies engaged in such trade, and the dollar amounts of the sales. His Complaint asserts that such information must be released under the Freedom of Information Act and that disclosure is in the national interest because it involves "the very question of whether we are engaged in arming a potential adversary with materials of warfare."

Obviously, the Soviets know what products they are receiving and from whom, and what is their strategic value. Why should the American people be denied such information? We need this information because Congress is now considering liberalizing amendments to the Export Administration Act of 1969.

In denying Evans' request on September 14, 1977, Secretary Kreps patronizingly assured Evans, "please be assured that in considering license applications, the Department checks the specifics of each transaction to assure that the proposed export will be used for peaceful purposes." In the light of recent testimony, we do not feel so assured.

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