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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 15, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR FRED FIELDING

THROUGH: DAVID B. WALLER  
FROM: HUGH HEWITT *HN*  
SUBJECT: Request of Salvatore Turco for Presidential Assistance in Obtaining a .45 Caliber Pistol

The attached letter from Salvatore Turco was referred by Congressman Sherwood Boehlert to Mr. Dennis Thomas, Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs, who referred it to Anne Higgins, who in turn forwarded it to us. Mr. Turco, a licensed gun dealer, requests the help of the President in obtaining a .45 caliber pistol for his collection. Turco had been informed by Congressman Boehlert that he was banned by law from purchasing such a weapon.

I have reviewed the law which Turco cited as the ban to his purchase. It is broadly worded and applies far beyond the .45 to all handguns. Given the general availability of handguns I am uncertain as to the law's actual effect in practice. The statute does not, however, provide for any kind of Presidential waiver. I agree with David's suggestion that we refer the inquiry to the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and I have attached a draft letter to him for your signature. Also attached is a draft response to Mr. Turco notifying him of the referral.

Dennis Thomas has requested that a copy of the response be sent to him.

Attachments

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 15, 1985

Dear Mr. Turco:

Thank you for your recent letter to President Reagan expressing your interest in acquiring a .45 caliber pistol. I have reviewed P.L. 90-351, and it does not provide the President with the authority to grant a waiver on the restrictions governing the sale of such weapons.

I, however, have forwarded a copy of your letter to the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, for his information and for whatever action, if any, he deems appropriate.

Sincerely,

Orig. signed by FFF

Fred F. Fielding  
Counsel to the President

Mr. Salvatore T. Turco  
51 Gorge Road  
Middleburgh, NY 12122

cc: Congressman Sherwood Boehlert

FFF:HH:lm  
FFFfielding  
HHewitt✓  
Chron (2)

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 17, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR STEPHEN E. HIGGINS  
DIRECTOR  
BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARMS

FROM: FRED F. FIELDING *Orig. signed by FFF*  
COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

Attached please find a photocopy of a recent letter to the President from Mr. Salvatore Turco, a licensed gun dealer in Middleburgh, New York. Mr. Turco requests the President's assistance in obtaining a .45 automatic pistol. I have advised Mr. Turco that that statute cited by him as a ban to his purchasing the weapon does not authorize the President to grant a waiver. I further advised him that I had forwarded a copy of his letter to you for your information and for whatever action, if any, you deem appropriate.

We have no continuing interest in this matter, except for confirmation that you have responded to Mr. Turco. Thank you.

Attachment

FFF:HH:lm  
FFFfielding  
HHewitt ✓  
Chron (2)

I would like to own a ...  
memento of my three years and seven months  
service in WW II. It would not be sold, it  
would be mine only.

I hope you can be instrumental in my  
acquiring one of these 45's. It would please  
me immensely; almost as much as the pleasure  
you gave me in the shellacking you  
gave to MONDALE & FERRARO. If you can  
run for a third term, I will vote for  
you again.

Sincerely

John T. Turco

P.S. My Congressman is SHERWOOD BOEHLETT of  
the 25<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT, NEW YORK. I am happy to say that  
Congressman Boehlert has been responsive to me  
several times in the past. I wish I could say  
as much for Senator D'Amato.



President Ronald Reagan

Mr. President:

I have attempted through my Congressman a means of acquiring an .45 CALIBER AUTOMATIC SIDE ARM that is going to be phased out of the U.S. ARMY weapons arsenal. My first wish was to buy several, one of which I would keep, and the other put up for sale. I am a licensed Federal Gun Dealer, having been licensed in 1980. I am also a veteran of WWII, having served both stateside and in the South Pacific. I have an honorable discharge and have never been in trouble. I recently retired from active employment and have already received two S.S. checks. So much for my background.

My Congressman informed me that Public Law 90-351 prohibits the sale of .45 caliber pistols to the private sector. He also informs me that the Army is required under P.L. 90-351 to offer the opportunity to purchase these weapons to "INTERNATIONAL LOGISTICS CUSTOMERS" foreign nations who have purchased .45's from us in the past.

It seems to me that American citizens, veterans with a clean background, citizens who for years have paid their taxes and contributed to the economy, protection and welfare of this country should be granted the privilege of purchasing one of the world wide famous .45 Automatics for his own personal use or possession.