

The U.S. blocks exports of medical supplies to other countries



Ottawa, April 5 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump has deployed the Defense Production Act (DPA) to block exports of surgical masks manufactured by the 3M company to Canada.

By implementing this Korean War-era national security law, the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are able to apply measures that allow the Trump administration to secure the medical supplies it deems necessary. The DPA may also compel a private company to prioritize serving requests from the U.S. federal government.

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau reacted to those actions, which hinder the distribution of medical supplies towards other countries. "Medical products and other essential goods are crossing the border in both directions. It would be a mistake for the two countries to limit each other's access to essential goods and personnel," Trudeau warned, hinting that he will retaliate if the U.S. government does not change its current policies.

Described by analysts as a modern form of piracy, the hoarding of medical supplies by the United States is also affecting other countries' capabilities to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to information published by BBC Brazil on Saturday, Germany's Interior Minister Andreas Geisel reported that the United States confiscated 200,000 protective face masks that were to leave from Bangkok (Thailand) to his country, which was to use them for the security of the Berlin police.

"This is not the way to deal with transatlantic partners," Geisel said and added that "even in times of global crisis, it is not correct to use 'Wild West' methods." A similar event could affect Brazil. The Bahia state government awaited the arrival of a load of 600 artificial respirators from China. The equipment seller, however, canceled the shipment, which was to stop in Miami before arriving in Brazil.

It is suspected that the United States offered the Chinese supplier a higher value for the supplies, which were initially valued at about \$8 million," as Forum reported. The same happened in France where U.S. buyers are offering higher values for medical supplies previously negotiated with local authorities.

"I found one stock of masks but U.S. dealers offer triple price and argue that paid in advance," the Ile-of-France Region president Valerie Pecresse said.

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