

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **Federal Government uses National Security to hide government e mail from US, but gives veterans' medical records to US company**

FOI records from US Trade Representative show Americans unhappy about being shut out of federal government contracts over *Patriot Act* concerns

**VANCOUVER, B.C.**—Documents obtained by the BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Association from the Office of the US Trade Representative show growing tension between the Canadian and American government related to Canadian restrictions on government electronic systems procurement.

The records, released under American freedom of information laws, reveal the USTR's concern over increasing use by Canada of the National Security Exception in NAFTA to keep American companies from bidding on Canadian government contracts. These included a new electronic communications system for the federal government and "fully integrated software service" for the Canadian Tourism Commission. Both contracts were restricted to Canadian companies and the data was required to be stored in Canada.

[http://fipa.bc.ca/library/Released\\_through\\_FOI/USTR%20TPP.pdf](http://fipa.bc.ca/library/Released_through_FOI/USTR%20TPP.pdf)

In their public explanation of why they had invoke the national security exception, officials in the Prime Minister's Office indicated they did not want the Chinese company Huawei taking part in the construction of the communications network.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-19879864>

However, the USTR documents quote a senior Canadian trade official as saying the reason was "privacy concerns stemming from the *Patriot Act*".

"These records show the federal government is concerned about protecting their internal communications from the Americans", said FIPA executive director Vincent Gogolek. "Yet we found out last week that they have handed over veterans' medical information to Iron Mountain Holdings, an American company which is subject to the *Patriot Act*. That's hypocritical."

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