

Canadian Execs Acquitted in U.S.

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A Canadian night-vision equipment manufacturer and two of its executives have been acquitted in a San Francisco court of fraud charges against them. Newcon International Ltd. faced the charges in connection with a supply contract with the U.S. army to provide night-vision goggles for Iraqi forces. The U.S. Department of Justice made its allegations in 2005, and the charges were laid in 2007. The firm's president, Michael Beker, and former vice president, Arie Prilik, were also charged. Peter Biro, a partner at WeirFoulds LLP, co-ordinated the international defence team. He's also external general counsel for Newcon. "This is a complete vindication," Biro said. "We have asserted from the beginning that the charges were groundless and that the conduct of both Newcon and its executives was beyond reproach." In her ruling, U.S. District Court Judge Marilyn Hall Patel described the work of prosecutors as "sloppy." Beker returned to Canada last week after spending the last year confined to California as part of his bail terms. "This ordeal has been traumatic for my company, my staff, and my family," said Beker. "It took all my strength and resolve to stand up to the formidable and intimidating force of the United States justice system. But I knew that I was right, I knew that I was innocent, and I am very grateful that it is over now."

WeirFoulds^{LLP}

www.weirfoulds.com

Toronto Office

4100 – 66 Wellington Street West
PO Box 35, TD Bank Tower
Toronto, ON M5K 1B7

Tel: 416.365.1110

Fax: 416.365.1876

Oakville Office

1320 Cornwall Rd., Suite 201
Oakville, ON L6J 7W5

Tel: 416.365.1110

Fax: 905.829.2035