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# Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-09-987](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

Congress passed the Tom Lantos Block Burmese JADE Act in 2008 prohibiting the import of Burmese-origin jadeite, rubies, and related jewelry and calling for certain international actions. The act also requires GAO to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this section of the act.

This report assesses (1) key characteristics of the trade of Burmese-origin jadeite and rubies; (2) progress agencies have made to restrict imports of Burmese-origin jadeite, rubies, and related jewelry; and (3) the progress agencies have made in pursuing international actions.

GAO reviewed and analyzed policy guidance, reports, and trade data and interviewed officials from the Departments of State (State), Homeland Security (DHS), other U.S. agencies, as well as U.S. and foreign jewelry industry representatives and foreign government officials.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DHS, in consultation with relevant agencies, take additional steps to issue guidance regarding imports of non-Burmese-origin goods, and that State, in consultation with DHS and the Department of the Treasury, analyze JADE Act measures and challenges and report to Congress how such measures contribute to its efforts to exert influence on the Burmese regime.

DHS concurred with our first recommendation and State concurred with our second recommendation.

View [GAO-09-987](#) or [key components](#). For more information, contact Loren Yager at (202) 512-4347 or [yagerl@gao.gov](mailto:yagerl@gao.gov).

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### U.S. Agencies Have Taken Some Steps, but Serious Impediments Remain to Restricting Trade in Burmese Rubies and Jadeite

#### What GAO Found

The Burmese jadeite and ruby trades are very different from one another and significantly involve China and Thailand. Burmese-origin jadeite is primarily purchased, processed, and consumed by China. Burmese-origin rubies are reportedly largely smuggled into Thailand, yielding little revenue to the Burmese regime, and are significantly processed there.

U.S. agencies have taken some steps but have not shown that they are effectively restricting imports of Burmese-origin rubies, jadeite, and related jewelry while allowing imports of non-Burmese-origin goods. Some U.S. jewelry representatives said import restrictions constrain legitimate ruby imports. Agencies published an interim final rule, but DHS has not developed specific audit guidance or conducted any postentry reviews of importers' records. In addition, there is little guidance to importers on what constitutes verifiable evidence of non-Burmese-origin. Although agencies have begun to collect data on ruby and jadeite imports, further efforts could contribute to an understanding of whether restrictions are effectively targeting Burmese-origin imports.

Agencies sent a required 60-day report to Congress, but it had little information on progress and challenges related to gaining international support to prevent trade in Burmese-origin rubies, jadeite, and related jewelry. Agencies have made no discernible progress in gaining such international support. Strong support and the cooperation of China and Thailand are important to restrict trade in these items, but highly unlikely. The Office of the United States Trade Representative has not requested a World Trade Organization waiver and State has not introduced a United Nations resolution, noting a number of countries would likely oppose a resolution. Finally, there have been no international meetings to negotiate a global arrangement restricting trade in Burmese rubies and jadeite similar to the Kimberley Process for restricting trade in conflict diamonds. Agency officials cited serious impediments to establishing such a framework.

Colored Gemstone Jewelry, Including Ruby and Jadeite Jewelry, for Sale in Rangoon, Burma



Source: GAO.