

Draft paper on UN arms treaty released at Prep Conference

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The most recent Chairman's Draft Paper for the United Nations (UN) Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) authored by Ambassador Robert Garcia Moritan of Argentina was distributed July 14 in New York.

According to a report by Julianne Versnel, director of operations for the Second Amendment Foundation, the draft paper traces an outline for the proposed ATT based on consultation, discussion and guidelines decided upon in the third and latest Preparatory Conference meeting, which ended on July 15, as well as the two previous meetings. The document covers the Scope, Criteria, Implementation and Final Provisions that are expected to be in the ATT presented for discussion at the July 2012.

"The Preamble under item six, 'recognizes the sovereign right of States to determine any regulation of internal transfers of arm and national ownership exclusively within their territory, including through national constitutional protections on private ownership,'" Versnel reported. This language is a direct response to the serious reservations expressed by the US and other delegations.

"Unfortunately," Versnel reported, "after this comes the Scope of the proposed treaty, including along with tanks, artillery systems, naval vessels and missile systems—small arms and all ammunition for these small arms."

While acknowledging a constitutional right, the criteria and proposed recordkeeping in the treaty would necessitate the special marking of all firearms and, more critically, all ammunition. The costs involved in both the physical marking and recordkeeping are enormous. The proposed document also includes the creation of an Implementation Support Unit with yearly reporting and records kept for a minimum of 10 years.

"Another egregious proposal," Versnel said, "is the Victim Assistance proposal, one that has been presented repeatedly at UN Programme of Action and Conference of Parties meetings. Many African, South American, Central American and Caribbean countries have proposed that manufacturers contribute to a fund based on their sales. Alternatively they would assess fees on countries based on the value of its arms exports."

As the ATT moves closer to its final form, Versnel said, it is imperative that Americans realize that the technical requirements and definitions still to be determined are very dangerous and include common hunting and target shooting areas.

The US already has the most stringent import and export requirements for firearms in the world. While this proposed treaty is supposed to be about conventional weapons, the focus in the

discussions is on small arms, the very firearms that the US Constitution guarantees Americans have the right to bear.

Meanwhile, US Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) has drafted a letter to President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton expressing “grave concern about the dangers posed by the United Nations’ Arms Trade Treaty.”

And the National Rifle Association has urged its members to contact their US Senators and urge them to stand by Sen. Moran, the Constitution and America’s gunowners by supporting and signing the “important letter.”