

Friday, 13 July 2012 05:25

UN Arms Treaty Would Impact Second Amendment Rights

Written by [Raven Clabough](#)



The United Nations is working on a treaty that would impact Second Amendment rights in the United States and reveal the records of America's gun owners to foreign governments, placing the Second Amendment under international scrutiny. The UN Arms Trade Treaty is supported by organizations such as Amnesty International USA because of its purported potential for controlling unregulated weapons. But critics of the pact recognize the overreach it would create.

Wayne LaPierre, president of the National Rifle Association, warned that it would eventually lead to the complete eradication of Second Amendment rights. Americans "just don't want the UN to be acting as a global nanny with a global permission slip stating whether they can own a gun or not," he declared, adding, "It cheapens our rights as American citizens, and weakens our sovereignty."

In fact, the treaty could even impact American foreign policy, as under its terms Washington might be restricted from arming its allies such as Israel. The treaty's language would make it simple for nations to intercede in the transfer of arms from the United States to Israel using on the same allegations of human rights violations that have been levied against Israel in the past.

As another example, one clause in the treaty — prohibiting arms sales between UN members and non-UN member states — would prevent the United States from selling arms to Taiwan, as Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations. As noted by Fox News, "This would be highly problematic for the U.S. at a time when Beijing is engaged in unprecedented arms buildup." Greg Suchan, deputy assistant secretary in the State Department's Bureau of Political Military Affairs from 2000 to 2007, also stated that just as the treaty can be used to prohibit arms transfers between the United States and its allies, it may also make the trade of arms between rogue nations easier. He explained that the treaty may make it harder for Washington to advocate voluntary arms embargoes against such nations:

We might want to urge a country to not sell arms to a state whose government is particularly odious. But that government could then ask whether the sale is prohibited under the Arms Trade Treaty — and if it is not, they would argue they are meeting the international standard.

Suchan also indicated that the treaty may allow foreign nations to have access to the records of gun owners in the United States.

LaPierre contended that the UN's "refusal" to remove civilian firearms and ammunition from the scope of the treaty is essentially the global body's way of indicating that only governments should have access to weapons. He added,

The only way to address NRA's objections is to simply and completely remove civilian firearms from the scope of the treaty. That is the only solution. On that, there will be no compromise.

They're trying to impose a UN policy that gives guns to the governments — but the UN doesn't in turn make moral judgments as to whether these governments are good or bad.

If you're the government, you get the guns; if you're a civilian, you don't. But this will just end up helping evil governments and tyrants.... The UN view is that governments — not individual citizens — ought to protect people.

Iran has played a significant role in the negotiations for the treaty. Fox News notes:

The world body has already been criticized for appointing Iran to a key role in the talks, even as Tehran stands accused by the UN of arming Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's bloody crackdown on rebels. The Obama administration in 2009 reversed Bush administration policy by agreeing to take part in the talks.

Members of the U.S. Senate have already signed letters to President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that indicate their refusal to ratify any treaty that gives control of civilian guns or ammunition to the United Nations. Without ratification by two-thirds of the Senate, the treaty cannot become law.

A letter prepared by Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) states that members of the Senate have “grave concerns” about the treaty, and asserts that proposals concerning “all types of conventional weapons (regardless of their purpose), including small arms and light weapons, ammunition, components, parts, technology and related materials ... would be completely unenforceable.”

Another letter from Senator Jon Tester (D-Mont.) voices opposition to “any inclusion of small arms, light weapons, ammunition or related materials that would make the treaty overly broad and virtually unenforceable.”

Such requirements, however, would not prevent the treaty from going into effect elsewhere. According to Fox News, “Such a development could change the pattern of world arms transfers and reduce the U.S. share, which stands at about 40 percent of up to \$60 [billion] in global deals.”

Despite the strong show of opposition in the Senate, however, LaPierre remains concerned about the potential for Second Amendment rights' infringement:

If they get this through, then what comes along is the institutionalizing of the whole gun control-ban movement within the bureaucracy of UN — with a permanent funding mechanism that we [Americans] will be mainly paying for.

The world's worst human rights abusers will end up voting for this, while the Obama administration has not drawn a line in the sand like the previous administration did. Instead, it is trying to be a part of this train wreck because they think they can somehow finesse it. But, to me, there is no finessing the individual freedoms of American citizens.

In 2006, George W. Bush opposed the UN General Assembly resolution that would have launched the treaty process; however, President Obama agreed to it on the condition that the final agreement be reached by consensus — which permits any of the 193 member states the right of veto.

But that concession was not enough to assuage the concerns of the treaty's opponents.

“The administration swears they have a whole bunch of red lines, and they will block consensus if anyone crosses them,” said Suchan. “But the dynamics of international negotiations are that once you get 90 percent of what you seek, you say, ‘Maybe there is a way we can finesse the final 10 percent.’”