

By Paul Gallant, Alan Chwick, and Joanne D. Eisen

Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) proponents have lied from the beginning. And they persist in attempts to reassure people in countries that allow civilian firearm ownership that the ATT will not affect their national laws. We are told the Treaty will basically affect the illegal transfer of weapons, but not lawful civilian ownership.

Bull\$#!+! That's the Big Lie.

Proponents insist that they only wish to control "illicit" weapons. That limited goal was repeated many times, and is the reason why so many countries agreed to hold Treaty talks.

We are told that the control of lawfully possessed civilian firearms is not dealt with in this Treaty. The statement may be true; but it is utterly misleading. Although lawfully held weapons may not even be mentioned in the Treaty, countries abiding by the Treaty's requirements will find that they need to register and regulate civilian weapons.

The weapon-prohibitionists can see that, because of the existence of the black market, it's virtually impossible to control or eliminate illicit weapons. And they, calling themselves the "small arms community," have come to blame civilian-held weapons for the black market's existence.

In fact, a mantra evolved in the small arms community: "'Illegally-possessed' firearms nearly always start out as 'legally-possessed' weapons.'" If weapons possessed by civilians could be more tightly controlled, or even eliminated, they believe the black market will no longer be a reliable source. And peace would reign.

Anti-gun researcher Lora Lumpe stated, in 2005, "It is clear that the international community widely accepts that regulation of civilian access to weapons is central to efforts to curb international gun trafficking." And so by pushing the ATT as a worldwide effort to control illicit arms, we know that the small arms community means to gain complete control over our civilian guns. That control is intended to result in their eventual ban.

Wayne LaPierre, Executive Vice President of the NRA, recognized this doublespeak. He stated at a UN ATT conference in July 2011: "We are told, 'Trust us; an ATT will only affect the illegal trade in firearms.' But then we're told that in order to control the illegal trade, all states must control the legal firearms trade." LaPierre also charged that the ATT, as proposed, would require registration of all civilian-owned weapons.

ATT proponents countered LaPierre's objections. According to the *Arms Trade Treaty Monitor* of November 17, 2011, "Nothing in the proposed ATT would have any impact on the ability of individuals within the United States to acquire and possess firearms."

Bull\$#!+!

And, the *Monitor* continued: "From the outset, negotiations with respect to the proposed ATT

have focused on regulating international transfers of armaments, and have expressly disclaimed any intention to interfere with the right of any member nation to determine its own internal regulation of firearms within its territory."

Just more bull\$#!+!

Scott Stedjan, Oxfam America's advisor on conflict prevention, explained: "Adding transparency to the international arms trade by keeping track of transfers and reporting on them is not the same thing as gun registration. No treaty will require individuals to register their weapons – though it may require governments to report on who they granted licenses to, the destination of the weapons, and the quantity.... It's strange to argue that states shouldn't have a handle on legal trade in order to regulate illegal trade."

The bull\$#!+ is endless!

We should not permit ourselves to be fooled about the intent of the small arms community. They do not verbally link the ATT with their intended goal of eventual civilian disarmament. Yet we know, for sure, that they intend for the ATT to accomplish that goal.

And we know it because they have written many books and articles as background to the ATT that details their peculiar brand of logic, their philosophy, and their plans.

Because ATT proponents never come right out and say "we want your guns," many American firearm owners remain in denial about the effects of this Treaty – and more specifically, its danger to our U.S. norm of civilian firearm possession.

The small arms community quickly came to understand that, by actually stating the truth, they were only creating a strong backlash – specifically from the NRA. They decided to lie by omission and remain silent.

Here's what happened.

In March 2001, a draft proposal was prepared in advance of a summer meeting at the UN, intended to create a global Programme of Action (PoA) to deal with the control of small arms. That initial proposal included manufacture, stockpile, transfer and possession.

John R. Bolton, then-Under-Secretary of State, indicated that the U.S. would oppose "measures that prohibit civilian possession of small arms...." At that point, the word "possession" was eliminated, to the dismay of the small arms community.

Ernie Regehr, co-founder of Project Ploughshares, an anti-gun NGO [non-governmental organization], angrily wrote in January 2002: "One of the more controversial and disappointing outcomes of the conference [PoA] was the failure of States to explicitly commit to more effective regulation of civilian possession and use of SALW [Small Arms & Light Weapons]."

Then, quietly, camouflaging their ultimate goals, the small arms community worked to

change the global norm. Using public relations techniques to create a fear of weapons and foster the belief that peace can only be achieved after disarmament, and using the natural desire of government to increase power, by 2005, at least a dozen countries significantly restricted civilian possession and use of firearms.

The trend continues rapidly. Just recently, in June 2011, Pakistani Associate Professor of Defense Saima Malik stated that it was necessary "to disarm the society to make it more secure and strengthen the country." In October 2011, the Ugandan government decided to recall civilian guns; owners will have to reapply for new firearm certificates, and there will be "more stringent criteria for issuing firearms to civilians."

In South Sudan, a disarmament campaign was announced for Unity State in November 2011,

"the latest in a series of efforts to disarm civilians...." In Venezuela, it was announced on December 20, 2011 that licenses will not be issued for the following year, as "part of a national disarmament plan."

The list goes on.... Here in the U.S. in the last decade, we gun-owners, as a group, rallied against the firearm-prohibitionists and we are winning, a trend the small arms community calls "alarming." But in the rest of the world, the firearm-prohibitionists continue to pursue their battle, and they are succeeding in changing the global norm.

We need to understand that, guided by the lying proponents of the Arms Trade Treaty, we are rapidly becoming one small island on a globe where the norm is strict firearm regulation leading to disarmament.

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