

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 26, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear President Obama and Secretary Clinton:

As staunch defenders of the rights of law-abiding Americans to keep and bear arms, we write regarding ongoing negotiations of the United Nations' Arms Trade Treaty, and to express concerns about any provisions that could potentially infringe upon those rights.

We support efforts to better regulate the international trade of conventional weapons, but such efforts must be done in a responsible manner. We should do everything we can to ensure these weapons do not end up in the hands of human rights abusers, terrorist groups, insurgents or organized criminal enterprises. Further, we should not allow the unregulated trade of these weapons to continue fueling conflict and instability in nations around the world. The profound human and economic toll from these conflicts is staggering and the subsequent impact on our nation's economic and security interests is increasing. The United States has adopted a rigorous system of arms export controls and it is time for other nations to abide by some of those same standards.

For the past few years, negotiations for the Arms Trade Treaty have progressed. As your Administration continues to engage in these negotiations, we strongly urge you to address a number of our concerns.

First and foremost, the Arms Trade Treaty must not in any way regulate the domestic manufacture, possession or sales of firearms or ammunition. Firearms possession is an individual right guaranteed by the Second Amendment and that cannot be subordinated, directly or indirectly, by any international treaty. We are encouraged that your administration is working to ensure that signatory countries will maintain the exclusive authority to regulate arms within their own borders. That must continue to be non-negotiable. We also oppose any inclusion of small arms, light weapons, ammunition or related materials that would make the Treaty overly broad and virtually unenforceable. Finally, the establishment of any sort of international gun registry that could impede upon the privacy rights of law-abiding gun owners is a non-starter.

As members of the United States Senate, it is our constitutional responsibility to advise and consent on the ratification of the United Nations' Arms Trade Treaty. Before we could support ratification, we must have assurances that our concerns are adequately addressed and that the Treaty will not in any way impede upon the Constitutional rights of American gun owners. Anything short of this commitment would be unacceptable.

We appreciate your consideration on this issue and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Jon Tester

Janne Shaker

Mark Begich

Coinc McCasill

My Baines

Paul Manchillo

Mark Royce

Bob Carey, Jr.

Tom Udall

to Benjamin Nelson

Jim Webb

Mark Udall

Mark R. Warner