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U.S. Opposition to Including Ammunition in the ATT

- The United States opposes including ammunition in the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).
- We understand that many wish to do so, but we believe that careful examination of the issue will clearly show that the costs to States Parties of attempting to control ammunition within the context of the ATT greatly outweigh any benefits that could possibly result from doing so.
- The international community has been trying to grapple with problems posed by illicit trafficking in ammunition for more than ten years.
- Multilateral fora such as the UN Program of Action for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons (UN PoA), the Wassenaar Arrangement, and the UN Register of Conventional Arms have each looked at ammunition from their respective vantage points without being able to agree on an approach. The reasons for this impasse have not changed.
- We should be careful about introducing into the ATT discussion issues that could put at risk the momentum that has been gathering and risk having the ATT negotiations get bogged down on the issues that have paralyzed these fora in discussing ammunition.
- Ammunition is different from weapons, requiring a different approach to combating its illicit trade.

Quantities Involved Are Immense

- The quantities involved in military transfers of small arms ammunition are immense, many orders of magnitude greater than the quantities of weapons transferred.
- For example, the United States annually produces approximately six billion rounds of small arms ammunition and approximately forty-five to sixty million rounds of medium to larger caliber (greater than 12.7mm) ammunition including grenades, rockets, and demolition charges. We track transfers by the pallet or ton, not by the round, and our typical transfers involve hundreds of thousands or millions of rounds.
- Accounting for ammunition transfers can be extremely problematic under even the best of circumstance for Member States with the best of intentions and with strong control systems.

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Limitations of Post-Shipment Verification

-- By its nature, ammunition is consumed when it is used, and it can be used under a range of legitimate circumstances. Whether the ammunition is used on a firing range, in a training exercise, in a peacekeeping operation, or during wartime, ammunition is consumed.

-- Cartridges can be, and regularly are, reloaded. Casings from ammunition legitimately expended could be reloaded and diverted.

Same Calibers Used by Military and Law Enforcement

-- Ammunition is manufactured both for military use AND law enforcement or recreational use. The most prevalent ammunition calibers are shared by military or security forces and sportsmen such as hunters or target shooters.

-- It is virtually impossible to distinguish many types of military ammunition from those used in the commercial and recreational industry (e.g., 9 mm, .223 caliber, and .30 caliber are used by both military personnel and by sport shooters).

-- Attempting to control or limit the trade in ammunition in an effort to prevent its diversion to conflict situations, terrorists, or criminals would unnecessarily interfere with the use of ammunition in the pursuit of licit activities, which is not the intention of the ATT.

Marking and Tracing Won't Help

-- Focusing on the worldwide trade in small arms ammunition is fraught with difficulty. In the context of the regulatory scheme that will be required by an ATT, some participants will press for marking requirements for ammunition.

-- Any method of marking ammunition that is practical from the point of view of the producer is likely to be easily defaced or defeated.

-- Durable physical markings on each cartridge would be expensive, require enormous recordkeeping obligations and may not be an effective means to fight trafficking.

-- Marking even the smallest container of ammunition would only identify its origin. Reloaded ammunition will identify the original manufacturer, providing a false trail, as there would be no information about intermediate expenditure and subsequent reloading.

-- In the United States, current ammunition tracing capabilities are generally limited to matching

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