Good afternoon, Mister Chairman. Thank you for the privilege of addressing the Committee on behalf of the Defense Small Arms Advisory Council, an association comprised of most of the US-based manufacturers of military small arms.

We are here today to express our support for an Arms Trade Treaty that, if properly crafted, appropriately focused, and equitably enforced, may for the first time subject all of the international arms trade to uniform standards for export and import licensing. Those of us engaged in the legitimate arms trade—whose transactions are rigorously scrutinized by an actively engaged national regulatory authority—are keenly aware of the consequences that continue to result from a lack of effective regulation in parts of the world.

As things now stand, there are two international arms trades: one of them is above ground, visible, transparent, and exists to provide the military small arms that enable states to carry out their responsibilities for national and international security and to maintain the rule of law within their own boundaries. That is the trade that our members are involved in. Every transaction undertaken by our members is subjected to thorough scrutiny by a government that has the means and the will to prevent exports that are questionable. There is, however, Mister Chairman, another arms trade in the world and it operates under very different rules in which little thought seemingly is given to the human consequences of transactions; that is the trade that needs to be brought under control.
In our view, the human suffering that is inflicted upon innocent people in places where there is little or no control on the flow of military weapons is something that can be stopped if uniform export and import licensing standards are adopted and enforced.

We are concerned, however, Mister Chairman, that the much needed Arms Trade Treaty will be drafted by those who know only the end-state they are seeking but may have little actual knowledge of how to get there. In order to be effectively implemented, a treaty must be properly crafted and we think that civil society has a vital role to play in that process. To date, however, those aspects of civil society who argue the need for an arms trade treaty have been clearly heard on many occasions, often given free access to venues and forums where the groundwork for crafting a treaty is done. The same, however, cannot be said for those elements of civil society that have actual experience and expertise as members of industry engaged in the international arms trade and who, if asked, will lend that experience and expertise to those attempting to craft an effective treaty. Part of this disparity stems from the administrative convenience found in separating non-governmental organizations into only two groups, those who are demonstrably in favor of an ATT, and all others, who by default are presumed to oppose such a treaty. This segregation is factually incorrect, logically fallacious, needlessly divisive, and may prove ultimately counter-productive.

My organization, Mister Chairman, continues to assure you of our willingness to help. It is up to those in charge of the drafting process to permit us to do so.

Contact: MG(Ret) D. Allen Youngman
Executive Director, DSAAC
execdir@dsaac.org