
Mr. President, the United States is proud to have been able to co-sponsor and vote in favor of adopting the Arms Trade Treaty. The treaty is strong, balanced, effective, and implementable, and we believe it can command wide support. We join others in congratulating Ambassador Peter Woolcott for his tireless efforts in guiding the negotiation.

The treaty is the product of a long, intensive negotiation, and I know that no nation, including my own, got everything it may have sought in the final text. The result, however, is an instrument that succeeds in raising the bar on common standards for regulating international trade in conventional arms while helping to ensure that legitimate trade in such arms will not be unduly hindered.

The negotiations remained true to the original mandate for them from UN General Assembly Resolution 64/48, which called for negotiating a treaty with the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms and for the negotiations to be conducted in an open and transparent manner, on the basis of consensus. The consensus rule remains important for the United States; the United Nations is most effective when it is able to take decisions by consensus.

Mr. President, as the United States has urged from the outset, this Treaty sets a floor – not a ceiling – for responsible national policies and practices for the regulation of international trade in conventional arms. We look forward to all countries having effective national control systems and procedures to manage international conventional arms transfers, as the United States does already.

We believe that our negotiations have resulted in a treaty that provides a clear standard, in Article 6, for when a transfer of conventional arms is absolutely prohibited. This article both reflects existing international law and, in paragraph three, would extend it by establishing a specific prohibition on the transfer of conventional arms when a state party knows that the transfer will be used in the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity, or the enumerated war and other crimes. Article 7 requires a state party to conduct a national assessment of the risk that a proposed export could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian law or international human rights law, as well as acts of terrorism or transnational organized crime. Taken together, these articles provide a robust and complementary framework that will promote responsible transfer of decisions by states parties.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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