

# EDITORIAL: Gun control by the U.N.

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Bureaucrats from 150 nations are ramping up efforts to impose gun control through international pact. Here in the United States, the [United Nations](#) Arms Trade Treaty has become the vehicle to drive an agenda that is deeply controversial because once a treaty is ratified by the [Senate](#), it becomes the supreme law of the land.

Last week, Secretary of State [John F. Kerry](#) — no friend of the Second Amendment — announced support for the treaty, which calls for international regulations on firearms, including personal firearms as well as military weapons. During the presidential campaign, President Obama was evasive about his position on the treaty. Now that he has fully “evolved” on the Second Amendment, he has the “flexibility” of not having to face voters again, and is pushing for the treaty.

There are plenty of reasons to be concerned about what’s being cooked up in Turtle Bay. Proponents say the treaty is only meant to crack down on illegal gun-smuggling, and the only people who ought to be concerned are military strongmen looking for a good deal on black-market rocket launchers. Of course, there’s more to the story. The exact wording of the agreement, and more importantly, how vague passages can be interpreted and twisted by the courts, will determine what the treaty actually means. It could, for example, force America to implement a national gun-registration scheme, ban importation of weapons and impose burdensome regulations on transfers.

The “Review Conference on [Illicit Small Arms Trade](#)” adopted a “consensus outcome document” that states in Article 2, Paragraph 4 that signatories to the treaty would “establish or update, as appropriate, and maintain a national control list that shall include the items that fall within paragraph A1 .” Paragraph A1 includes small personal firearms. Under Article 6, Paragraph 3, signatories (including the United States) would be required to set up an “effective, transparent and predictable national control system regulating the

transfer of conventional arms .” Once again, “conventional arms” would include civilian firearms protected by the Second Amendment.

Article 8, Paragraph 2 requires countries to “put in place adequate measures that will allow them, where necessary, to monitor and control imports of items covered by the scope of this Treaty.” This could prevent U.S. gun owners from buying foreign guns and parts. Other provisions of the document “underscored efforts in marking, record-keeping and cooperation in tracing small arms .” Tracing weapons is legalese for the creation of a gun registry.

The administration pretends that ratification of this deal would do nothing to undermine constitutional rights. “We will not support any treaty that would be inconsistent with U.S. law and the rights of American citizens under our Constitution,” says [Mr. Kerry](#). The secretary forgets that we can read, too. The written provisions of the treaty and the administration’s domestic agenda on these issues make such reassurance hollow, indeed.

In the wake of the Newtown, Conn., school massacre, Mr. Obama unleashed his all-out effort to ban “assault weapons” — the most popular type of rifle sold in America today. The White House proposals, however, should be doomed in the Republican-dominated House of Representatives. Use of the treaty process is a way to bypass that uncooperative body and accomplish many of the same gun-control goals with only 67 [Senate](#) votes.

If proponents of the arms-trade treaty are honest about their intentions, they should have no problem amending the draft treaty to explicitly limit the agreement to large, military weapons and exclude all civilian firearms that fall under the protection of the Second Amendment. The National Rifle Association has offered language that would amend the treaty to eliminate any exploitable ambiguity. Unless such corrections are made, the [Senate](#) should stand strong against international deals to trash the constitutional rights of Americans.