

**Defense Small Arms Advisory Council**

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Phone: 502-321-3423

Post Office Box 6025 Arlington, VA 22206-0025

United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of  
the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in  
Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

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Statement by Major General (Retired) D. Allen Youngman  
Executive Director, Defense Small Arms Advisory Council (DSAAC)  
30 June 2006

Mr President, I would first like to congratulate you on successfully organizing this conference to review progress made over the past five years on this subject of great importance to people around the world.

Second, I would like briefly to introduce to you and the members present our organization, the Defense Small Arms Advisory Council. DSAAC is a trade association that represents the majority of the US-based manufacturers who serve the military small arms market. Our member companies have a combined experience of more than three hundred years in the military firearms business. One of the founding purposes of our organization has been to serve as a means of communication between government agencies and this segment of the defense industry. It was our goal in seeking to attend this conference to serve a similar role for you and the members and to offer, where appropriate, advice on both technical and policy matters from the perspective of those engaged in the legitimate trade in arms. While we speak only for those companies that are members of our organization, I can say with confidence that our positions are shared by those of military small arms manufacturers in other countries as well.

Third, I want to assure you, Mr President, of the support of our organization and its member companies in accomplishing the purposes for which the Small Arms Program of Action was adopted five years ago. As a matter of their daily business operations, our companies must comply with the most demanding and meticulous export licensing program in the world. Because of this experience, we believe that we are uniquely qualified to be of assistance in achieving the vitally important goals of the Program of Action. For example, we

believe that concrete measures such as the adoption of uniform standards for end-user certificates will help prevent sales of military weapons to ineligible purchasers and thus, in addition to preventing the misuse of those weapons, will actually facilitate the conduct of legitimate transactions. We stand ready to assist in crafting such standards or in any other area where the members may find our many years of hands-on experience in the military arms trade to be useful.

Finally, Mr President, I would share with you and the members a concern regarding what appears to be a significant change in the direction of this effort.

The original purpose that led to adoption of the PoA in 2001 was preventing the devastation posed by illicit trafficking in military arms leftover from conflicts in various parts of the world. The unregulated sale and distribution of such surplus military weapons served no legitimate purpose and was to the benefit of no one, including our industry. Therefore, we have from the beginning been highly supportive of measures undertaken by our government and those of other member states to implement more effective means of monitoring and regulating the worldwide trade in military small arms.

More recently, however, it appears that, even though much work remains to be done in implementing the original goals of the PoA, they are already in danger of being relegated to secondary importance in favor of the advancement of other agendas. Concerns that the process has shifted its focus from the control of military weapons to a much broader and—in the view of many—much more intrusive scheme concerning firearms of all types now complicate efforts to further implement the PoA. This perception is increasingly becoming an

encumbrance to sustaining support for the overall program and, if not addressed, may put at risk the achievement of the original goals. The fact that much of the impetus for this change in purpose and priorities seems to come not from member governments but rather from private organizations has served further to undermine the willingness of some to support additional implementing measures.

Mr. President, as a non-governmental organization we are ever mindful of the fact that we are guests here and that we must not seek to set the agenda for this body because, unlike the governments represented here today, by definition an NGO can speak only for private interests.

We must also respect the right of the participating members to pursue any course of action they deem appropriate. However, as I indicated earlier, the more closely the chosen course of action adheres to the original purposes of the Program of Action, the more readily will industry be able to continue building support for its implementation.

Mr. President, thank you for affording us the opportunity to share our views with you and, as said at the beginning, be assured that we stand ready to assist you and the members in the important and challenging work ahead.