



## UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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### United States Statement: ATT Session One

Mr. Chairman:

As my first intervention, let me start by congratulating you and the Bureau on your election, and assure you the United States will cooperate fully with you in pursuing the goals of our discussion.

I have listened carefully to the discussion this week, and would like to make some comments on what I have heard. Before I do that, however, I would like to ensure that all the delegates in the room understand the approach of the United States to the subject of an Arms Trade Treaty.

We participated actively in the Group of Government Experts last year, and thus endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of that Group, achieved in large degree through your excellent and vigorous leadership. I trust we will benefit from those same skills during this exercise.

We were also the only country to vote “no” on the resolution relevant to this discussion in the UNGA last autumn. One of the major reasons we did so has been reflected in the discussion we have heard so far during this week.

None of this history, though, can or should be taken to mean that the United States is not interested in and would not support effective international arrangements for controlling the international conventional arms trade, and especially preventing such arms from serving illegitimate or anti-humanitarian purposes. In fact, the United States is currently undertaking a full review of what we might seek through these discussions. I look forward to being able to share the initial results of that review with you during the next session of this Open Ended Working Group.

But, Mr. Chairman and distinguished colleagues, I have been struck this week by the number of interventions proclaiming generic and laudable “goals, objectives, parameters, and elements” that fit more appropriately into a treatise following on to Thomas More’s “Utopia.” I was refreshed to hear my UK colleague address some of this issue on Tuesday, but I fear that even that was couched more in terms of an ideal than something we might be able to grapple successfully with during our tenure.

The United States, for its part, intends to participate actively in seeking a constructive and effective outcome to our deliberations. I sincerely hope we will be able to offer proposals and constructs that will, upon examination, prove viable elements for our discussions.

My intention for this intervention is to encourage others to take advantage of the time between now and our next meeting to approach the problem from a similar perspective. We have had now what in most multilateral meetings could be called the “general debate” on the topic. As my UK colleague stated, I have heard no delegation state there was not at least room for, if not a crying need of, an effective and feasible way to better control international arms trade, and to prevent those arms from serving illegitimate and anti-humanitarian end purposes.

But one of the values and handicaps of this forum is its open-ended format. It ensures one of the most important parts of our mandate: transparency. On the other hand, it encourages a certain diffuseness.

Mr. Chairman, what I would like to request, of you, of the Bureau, and of my colleagues, is to use the inter-sessional time to reflect on how to compress and focus some of the important concepts we have all shared during this meeting. We should resolve to return in July prepared to compare some of those operational elements – even though it would not cover in a week all the elements of a potential result – and use that comparison to expose more directly some of our agreements and some of our differences, so we will be in a position to find ways better judge the direction where we could move forward constructively.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and colleagues.