Biennial Meeting of States on the Programme of Action  
June 19, 2014

Second Amendment Foundation  
By Julianne Hoy Versnel

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I am Julianne Hoy Versnel of the Second Amendment Foundation.

Mr. Chairman, the POA and other UN efforts repeatedly and vociferously discuss gender issues. They acknowledge that women are disproportionately the victims of horrendous violence, sometimes even perpetrated by their own governments or others in power. Yet, they turn a blind eye to the reality that women have a right to defend themselves and are capable of doing so. The Programme of Action seems unable to acknowledge anything beyond the simplistic notion that civilian firearms are inherently evil. Mr. Chairman, the right of women, indeed the right of men and woman, to self-defense is a human right.

While the Second Amendment to the US Constitution embodies this right, it is, in fact, a natural that all people have. Mr. Chairman, the United Nations is on a “collision course” with both the Second Amendment and the natural right of all people to defend themselves.

Indeed, this inability to recognize this right is a major failing with UN efforts in many areas, whether it be the POA, the Arms Trade Treaty or even the UN Human Rights Council. This is not a geographically limited issue and a growing number of organizations consider it vital. In fact, Mr. Chairman, the Second Amendment Foundation along 20 other civilian firearms rights groups from six continents came together in 2008 to form the International Association for the Protection of Civilian Arms (IAPCAR). IAPCAR intends to vigorously pursue the right to self-defense in every possible venue.

Mr. Chairman let me issue a challenge on the to this body and to the UN in general to correct a tremendous error. In 2006, Barbara Frey, a rapporteur for the UN Human Rights Council, wrote a report entitled Prevention of Human Rights Violations Committed with Small Arms and Light Weapons Frey Report known as U.N. Doc. A/HRC/Sub.1/58/27 27 July 2006.). Her report refused the idea that there is a right to have arms for self-defense and furthermore rejected any concept of self-defense as a human right. It also went on to say that states had a duty to engage in gun control. The kind of gun controls that makes self-defense impossible.

These conclusions were outrageous Mr. Chairman. These erroneous concepts have spread at the UN. It appears that Peru introduced a resolution at the UN Human Rights Council, based on the Frey report that, in essence, demanded that all states institute strict civilian gun control. NGOs are starting to base their opposition to firearms on the Frye report at the expense of recognizing an individual’s right to self-defense.

Mr. Chairman, the idea that there is no human right to self-defense is contrary to 600 years of international law. This includes such eminent sources as Hugo Grotias and Francisco de Victoria. Major religious traditions also endorse the idea of a human right to self-defense.

Mr. Chairman, it is obvious this debate cannot even begin to be resolved here. Regardless, let me repeat my challenge. The POA and the UN must acknowledge that there is a human right to self-defense. We will debate this is any venue, at any time, at any place. Thank you Mr. Chairman.
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Oral Presentation Version

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I am Julianne Versnel of the Second Amendment Foundation.

Mr. Chairman, the POA and other UN efforts repeatedly discuss gender issues. They acknowledge women are disproportionately the victims of violence, sometimes perpetrated by their own governments. Yet, they turn a blind eye to the reality that women have a right to defend themselves. The POA seems unable to acknowledge anything beyond the simplistic notion that civilian firearms are inherently evil. Mr. Chairman, the right of women, indeed the right of men and women, to self-defense is a human right.

While the Second Amendment to the US Constitution embodies this right, it is, in fact, a human right for all people everywhere. Mr. Chairman, the UN is on a “collision course” with the Second Amendment and the human right of all people to defend themselves.

Indeed, this inability to recognize this right is a major failing of many UN efforts, whether it is the POA, the ATT or even the UN Human Rights Council. This is an issue a growing number of organizations considers vital.¹

Mr. Chairman let me issue a challenge to the UN to correct a tremendous error. In 2006, the UN Human Rights Council, adopted a report entitled Prevention of Human Rights Violations Committed with Small Arms and Light Weapons (A/HRC/Sub.1/58/27). The report rejected the concept of self-defense as a human right and the idea that there is a right to have arms for self-defense. It also said that states have a duty to engage in gun control— the kind of gun controls that makes self-defense impossible.

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Contact Julianne Hoy Versnel +1 206 999 6126

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