

48 "Norming" Guns Away: Why We Need to be Concerned About the UN

By Paul Gallant, Alan Chwick, and Joanne Eisen

We American gun owners need to become more familiar with the process of "norming." The "norm" of civilian disarmament already surrounds our country and has the potential to nullify our Second Amendment right. When global firearm-prohibitionists speak about "norming," they are actually discussing the process wherein society becomes increasingly hostile to the possession of arms in the hands of civilians.

This standard, or norm, was deliberately created during several decades of lies about the safety and use of firearms, their benefits to society, and the kind of people who possess them. And yet, we gun-owners remain unaware of its ramifications and its dangers.

During the creation of this norm, we have seen the prohibitionists lie time and time again, magnifying the costs to society of private firearm ownership, minimizing their benefits, and creating widespread fear in the process. We know we're on the side of truth because we don't need to manipulate the facts to fit our philosophy, as do the prohibitionists. In two decades of firearms

research and experience, we have never seen a deliberate attempt by unbiased firearm researchers to obfuscate data.

The more people who accept the norm, the stronger the norm becomes. Owen Greene of Saferworld, an anti-gun non-governmental organization (NGO), elaborated: "It is generally agreed that controls on possession by civilians of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW, an ambiguous group of weapons that includes ordinary firearms) are a critical element of national controls to prevent, combat, and reduce SALW trafficking, proliferation and misuse." Greene is secure in the knowledge that this norm already has extremely vigorous and widespread global support.

The new norm does not allow for self-defense, as government intends to provide that service for us. Even if one might actually comply with strict regulations and even if one might actually be permitted to keep his/her sporting gun at home, instead of being locked up at the local range, these guns will never be available for emergency use.

One of the most damning ramifications of the new norm is that those few remaining gun-owners will be looked upon with disdain.

This is the norm that is presently being codified into a global legally binding Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) that will encompass all conventional weapons.

It might be possible for our laws to be changed because of this treaty, even without a Presidential

signature, or Senate ratification. The ATT is set to become the global norm, and the global firearm-prohibitionists would only need to wait for an opportune time to act. We expect that 175 of the approximately 200 nations in today's world would sign onto the ATT. Although many of these nations will sign with no expectation of complying with its provisions, this will not affect the strength of the norm.

According to attorney Joseph Bruce Alonzo, "Gun control laws could affect United States parties in the event that gun control becomes a customary international law [i.e. becomes a norm].... Non-consensual customary international law may arise as a result of international practice. This international practice may be evidenced by events not approved by the United States but eventually held binding on the United States."

That's how this norm, or soft law, has the potential to trump the Second Amendment.

John Bolton, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, recognized the norming process, and rejected it as being destructive to our Constitution. Expressing his displeasure, he wrote: "Much of the

development of norming comes as a result of people who are dissatisfied with political outcomes they have achieved at the state and federal level and who are determined to take their argument into the broader international context, who see the norming process as the way to constrain the United States."

There is another norm – our norm – which was bequeathed to us by our Founding Fathers. Ed Laurence of the Monterey Institute of International Studies complained: "An opposing norm that favors continued high levels of arms sales – based on the belief that citizens have the "right" to buy guns for self-defense, self-determination, entertainment, or to provide for their families – is preventing the development of a global consensus on small arms policy."

We are the last remaining hope for the sovereignty of individuals and the civilian possession of firearms. U.S. civilians own about 270 million firearms, about 30 percent of the total global stockpile of 875 million firearms. But we estimate that only about 5 million people, out of approximately 70-80 million American gun owners, have joined in one or more activist groups that have been formed to protect our right to private firearm ownership. This simply is not enough. We must get gun owners out of the closet and actively working hard with us.

How undamaged we and our rights emerge from this United Nations firestorm, that will engulf us for the next 5-10 years, depends upon how willing we all are to accept our responsibilities today. **B**

