



Alistair Burt MP,
Minister for Counter Proliferation
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
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20 August 2012

Dear Alistair,

We would like to commend the work that you and your team, led by Head of Delegation Jo Adamson, undertook in the run up to and during the Diplomatic Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty last month.

We share your disappointment that this conference did not adopt a treaty. Furthermore we were frustrated by a consensus-bound process that saw the text weakened to accommodate the concerns of a small group of countries whose commitment to a robust treaty is questionable at best.

The way forward now surely needs to be to take forward a resolution in the UN General Assembly's First Committee, based on a strengthened version of the text that was on the table at the Diplomatic Conference. This would enable a robust treaty to be established ready for further signatures.

The present text is a good basis for further work – we are nearly there – but there are a number of crucial loopholes that need to be closed before this text can be adopted as the robust Arms Trade Treaty towards which we have all been working.

To mention just one weakness in the present text, and one to the remedy of which the signatories of this letter attach very great importance, it is vital that signatory states be required to build in strong and binding provisions on transparency and reporting so that parliaments around the world can help ensure effective scrutiny of arms transfers.

Success in strengthening this text and gathering sufficient co-sponsors for the resolution will depend to a large extent on the UK's continued political leadership and diplomatic effort, which up until now has been commendable. You can be assured of the continued support of those of us in parliament and more widely for the strongest possible Arms Trade Treaty.

We would welcome the chance to discuss this with you at your convenience in advance of the UN General Assembly's First Committee in October.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Caton".

Martin Caton MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Weapons and Protection of Civilians

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lord Hannay".

Lord Hannay, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on the United Nations