

customers include all major U.S. producers as well as major manufacturers in Central<sup>31</sup> and South America, Europe, Africa, Australia and Asia. In addition to the commercially available products there are numerous references to making ammunition and firearms at home with basic tools.<sup>32</sup>

## AMMUNITION - COMPONENTS AND PRICES

The primary components for the manufacture of ammunition are: cartridge case, propellant or powder, primer and bullet.<sup>33</sup> Combine the above with hand loading equipment, even of the most basic type, and one is in the business of producing ammunition. It would seem that one area to investigate with regards to enhanced controls may be ammunition components.

### Cartridge Case

Cartridge cases, brass or steel, can be purchased in bulk, new or used. Brass cases unlike steel are less susceptible to corrosion. Individuals, once in the possession of cartridges can recycle them after firing. Recycled casings, for various reasons, may no longer have the same tolerances as new casings and can cause extraction problems and chamber fit problems if not properly checked and refurbished. Within reason, damaged cases can be repaired. However, over time such cases will deteriorate to the extent that they may no longer be re-useable. One source<sup>34</sup> noted that casings for one caliber can sometimes be hand or machine modified for use as another caliber provided it is to fit a shorter chamber and has essentially the same base size; an example would be a 30-06 in. casing modified for a 7.62 mm chamber. Another source stated that cases can be re-used up to 20 times without significant deterioration.<sup>35</sup> In the opinion of a few sources the casing may be the ammunition component that is most difficult to adequately produce in a cottage industry -- it would be possible providing brass plate was available but the quality would not be particularly good and the amount produced would be quite low compared to factory

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<sup>31</sup> Including Central America is interesting. Open source literature that lists ammunition producing states is somewhat uncertain on this matter. As well, attendees at a Central American workshop on small arms as part of the UN Experts Panel on Small Arms seemed to imply that there was no production of ammunition in the region.

<sup>32</sup> A few examples can be found at <http://www.cnw.com/~xbook/w5.htm>. Examples include producing SMGs and shotguns along with ammunition.

<sup>33</sup> An excellent technical overview on ammunition basics can be found on the Internet at: [http://users.aol.com/vaquero760/a\\_index.htm](http://users.aol.com/vaquero760/a_index.htm)

<sup>34</sup> Private communication with author.

<sup>35</sup> John Traister and Robert Traister, *Complete Reloading Guide*, Stoecker Publishing Company, 1996. 28