

ammunition manufacturer complied, probably shift business from the complying company or state to the non-complying company or state.

Ammunition production relies on four major components: cartridge case; bullet; powder; and primer. All of these can be locally produced using makeshift material. The quality of such "home made ammunition" is much lower than that of commercially or privately produced ammunition using commercially available high grade components. Poor quality cartridges may be subject to misfires, cause jamming (extraction and/or ejection problems), be in-accurate, could possibly damage the firearm or in extreme circumstances cause injury or death to the user. It should be noted that the AK-47 is a very forgiving weapon regarding ammunition in comparison with many other types of small arms. With due care cottage industry based ammunition production would probably be deemed acceptable in reliability, particularly as it pertains to hardened organized criminal elements, terrorist groups and small determined guerrilla bands. In any event, such groups would likely have the financial resources and network to obtain quality ammunition through other sources. Production of "hand loaded ammunition" particularly using "home made components" would be inadequate in scale and reliability to support anything other than very small scale operations and would be an unlikely source for what could be termed the "casual user".⁷⁹ Again, primer and propellant controls offer some attraction primarily because there are fewer manufacturers in terms of states and companies and they are essential for the production of quality ammunition.

The technical studies currently being undertaken with regards to marking ammunition, either by powder taggants, bullet markings or even cartridge case markings tend to focus on forensic identification to assist the police in successfully concluding an investigation. Its domestic application within the context of crime solving in advanced states is not an issue in this study. The question to ask is how pertinent is this to civil and ethnic wars in South and South-East Asia and Central Africa or large scale criminal gang activities in Latin America or Central America? Also, is this a solution with a realistic global application in which all ammunition producing states would be participants? This type of application would seem to be of minimal value within the context of conflict and post-conflict situations in developing countries. However, further study is warranted.

As with arms embargoes, any attempt to more rigidly control ammunition production and sales, enhance export/import controls, or restrict sales to certain groups or states would probably result in even greater ammunition production diffusion. Necessity has always been the mother of invention. This risk would have to be measured against the real success of such constraints. Is the perceived cure worse than the disease? In the end, it is a policy decision with political overtones -- the appearance of doing something constructive by signaling moral disapproval may be deemed as important as actual prevention of casualties.

⁷⁹ There are some exceptions. South African authorities have complained about "homemade weapons and ammunition" being a problem.