

noted that if ammunition is stored properly, it is as good as the day it was manufactured."⁷⁵

Comments and examples contained at Annex B support this finding. Thus, it would seem that statements concerning the short shelf-life expectancy of ammunition may have been based on incomplete information.

Ammunition shortage does not seem to be an apparent problem, particularly in conflict and post-conflict areas, given the admittedly superficial but all too frequent television coverage of irregular and regular troops firing thousands of rounds in the air in celebration of a victory of some sort in the Middle East or Africa. Although it demonstrates poor discipline, it also seems to demonstrate a lack of concern over ammunition availability. There are several ways a group may address ammunition shortages ranging from theft to ambushes of security forces. There are few examples of inadequate supplies of ammunition creating a significant problem.⁷⁶ This is an area that requires more study.

Prohibiting Certain Ammunition For Civilians

There are several potential "ammunition solutions" that might be seen by some to have merit. In the view of this author their utility and the likelihood of their successful implementation are both highly problematic. One possibility is to deny the use of 9 mm, 7.62 mm and 5.56 mm of all chamber sizes to civilians⁷⁷. This would include making it illegal to own guns that chamber these rounds. That this would, in effect, be "global gun control"⁷⁸ is anathema to some individuals, groups and states. Furthermore, it is questionable whether it would address the problems inherent in so many developing states where enforcement mechanisms are woefully inadequate. It would not necessarily deny these weapons to groups that are supplied by states nor would it prevent leakage deliberate or otherwise from state sources. It would do nothing to stop the misuse of these weapons by some states themselves. It would probably take years to collect from civilians, particularly in developing countries, even 50 percent of the weapons capable of firing those rounds. In the mean time other small arms using different calibers may move to the forefront. Without a global agreement involving all major ammunition producing states and a commensurate massive enforcement capability, such an approach may be worse than useless. It could well use resources, particularly financial resources, that might be better used in addressing more pressing concerns, that in the short and long term may save many more lives.

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Kartha, 7. Kartha claims some insurgents in the sub-continent have experienced ammunition supply problems.

⁷⁷ It should be noted that this would probably mean that the .308 in and .223 in round would have to go, notwithstanding the .223 in was around as a civilian round long before it was adopted by military forces.

⁷⁸ "Gun control" is used here to indicate likely opposition to domestic firearms regulation.