



Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein Criticizing Bush
Administration's Decision Not to Appoint
Expert to Small Arms Delegation

June 27, 2006

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) called on the Bush Administration earlier this year to appoint Rachel Stohl as a public delegate to the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Small Arms Conference to be held June 26 to July 7 in New York.

But rather than appoint Ms. Stohl, one of the leading small arms and light weapons experts, the Administration appointed three men with strong ties to the National Rifle Association (NRA). This includes:

- James Gilmore, former Governor of Virginia and NRA Board Member;
- David A. Keene, Chairman of the American Conservative Union and NRA Board Member; and
- Christopher John, former member of Congress who received an A+ rating from the NRA.

Following is Senator Feinstein's statement criticizing this decision:

"I am deeply disappointed that Rachel Stohl, a Center for Defense Information Senior Analyst, was not appointed as a public delegate to the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Conference on Small Arms.

Despite over 10 years experience researching and working on small arms issues and a reputation as one of the leading experts on U.S. small arms policy, she was passed over for a spot on the delegation in favor of two National Rifle Association board members and a former Congressman who received an 'A+' rating from the NRA while in office.

In essence, the Administration has decided to take a pass on the qualifications of anyone who does not pass muster with the NRA and appoint a public delegation that does not represent the wide range of views on this issue in the United States.

The Administration has placed politics over expertise. As a result, our nation's ability to work with our friends and allies to stop the proliferation of small arms and light weapons around the world will be severely hampered.

Controlling small arms and light weapons is critical. These weapons threaten peace and stability around the world. From Afghanistan to Bosnia , and Rwanda to Haiti , these weapons kill innocent civilians, undermine economic growth and harm U.S. national security interests.

With hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops deployed around the world in peacekeeping and security operations, small arms and light weapons directly threaten the lives of our American military personnel. It is incumbent upon this Congress and this Administration to do everything in its power and use every tool at our disposal to protect our troops."

There are an estimated 639 million firearms in circulation around the world. Each year 300,000 people are killed by these small arms - a majority of those killed are civilians."

###