

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). The Chair will entertain unanimous-consent requests for 5-minute special orders, alternating sides of the aisle, for 1 hour, without prejudice to the resumption of legislative business.

WARS ARE TEMPORARY; LANDMINES ARE NOT

(Mr. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, last month the United Nations Association in my district sponsored an essay contest for high school students on the subject of eliminating land mines.

Land mines are a piece of military weaponry designed to help end wars, but wars are temporary and most mines are not, writes first place winner Andrew Feitt, a 9th grader from Santa Barbara's Laguna Blanca School.

Second place winner Nikolaus Schiffman, a 12th grader from Santa Barbara High School also hit the nail on the head when he wrote, Canada showed such leadership when it hosted the Ottawa Conference in October 1996, and hopefully the United States will make similar gestures.

It is time to eradicate all land mines before they do the same to us, says third place winner and 9th grader, Geren Piltz from Carpenteria High School.

Tomorrow is the first anniversary of the President's announcement that he will seek an international ban on land mines, but we have seen little progress. It is time to get serious about land mines. It is time to join the Canadian process. As my three constituents made clear, we must live without land mines.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the essays to which I referred:

WARS ARE TEMPORARY, BUT MINES ARE NOT (By Andrew Feitt, Santa Barbara, CA)

The devastating technology of land mines is one that plagues the battlefields and trouble spots of our century. They are a piece of military weaponry designed to help end wars, but wars are temporary, and most mines are not. Even when the conflict draws to a close and old enemies become friends, the mines remain, destroying the lives of simple men, women, and children who might never suspect their hidden presence. Yet what can the U.N. do to end this problem? The global community has tried before, and failed. Will anyone be able to cure the spreading plague of mine warfare?

Every fifteen minutes, it is estimated, a mine explodes and every day some seventy people die as a result. Nor are these combatants, for since the end of the Second World War ninety percent of those killed were civilians. Official government estimates put the number of mines at over 100,000,000, but

they acknowledge there could be many more lying in wait, as of yet undetected. According to Paul Davis, land mines are "... the greatest violators of international humanitarian law, practicing blind terrorism ... they never miss, strike blindly, and go on killing long after hostilities have ended." According to the Protocol II of the UN Inhumane Weapons Convention of 1980, landmines are, like chemical and biological weapons, to be strictly regulated. Many, however, wish to go further believing landmines should be banned outright, like chemical and biological weapons. Other countries, in which landmines constitute a great deal of their exports, believe they should only be regulated. Which side should the U.N. take?

The major supporters of a total ban on all mines, the Scandinavian countries, Ireland, Belgium, and New Zealand, favor an immediate end to production. They are a vocal, if small and seemingly unimportant group, especially when lined up against those from the other extreme, the major producers. China is the most visible, one of the last strongholds of Communism, ever at odds with the Capitalist West. A compromise must be reached if ever any action on landmines is to be taken.

At the 34th North American International Model United Nations Conference, held in Georgetown earlier this year, a topic raised was that of 'smart' mines. I myself had the opportunity to attend this conference, and this particular idea was well-thought and logical. 'Smart' mines, like 'smart' bombs, are weapons of war that can be programmed, i.e. in this case to deactivate themselves after a certain time period has elapsed. For example, if a conflict broke out between North and South Korea, the opposing armies could lay 'smart' mines on the demilitarized zone, activate them, then have them deactivated after nine months. Thus the effects would not be lingering. The best solution to ending the civilian casualties would be a U.N. resolution, passed by the Security Council, banning outright the production, import, and export of all forms of conventional landmines, though not 'smart' mines, and a gradual reduction of those currently in stock. Thus the only potential opponent to this, China, might grudgingly consent or abstain, not wishing to see some of its trading privileges revoked. Already the United Kingdom has declared a moratorium on conventional mine export, excluding the self-destruct or self-neutralizing 'smart' mines. The rest of the world should follow their example.

However, mere resolutions are not the only answer. Even when conventional mines are banned, many others will remain. Acting through non-governmental organizations such as the International Red Cross, the U.N. must help to provide immediate relief to the beleaguered nations. As well, U.N. affiliated organizations like the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) could also be of some assistance. Those countries most ravaged by landmines most often are those with recent, now resolved, conflicts, and often have U.N. observer forces there, whose duties could be expanded to landmine location and destruction.

Thirdly, in order to better address this issue in the world community, an ad hoc body of military and industrial analysts should be established whose sole duty would be to constantly review landmine removal efforts around the world at pinpoint potential trouble spots where large civilian populations are located near dormant minefields. This tribunal could also be entrusted with reviewing the efforts of member nations to end landmine production, and, if a nation fails to comply, suggest some form of economic retribution to the Security Council.

Of course, there is always the ever-present question. Who will pay for all this? Certainly the United Nations, already deep in debt, could not afford to fund all these efforts. There are many nations, such as the United States, that may begin paying back its debt when it sees the U.N. is moving in a productive direction. As well, there are numerous private companies, possibly seeking to invest in such countries as Vietnam, that may fund landmine removal if the minefield occupies the terrain they wish to build on. In 1993, it was a British mine-producing company that sought the U.N.'s permission for landmine removal. Once the U.N. begins this endeavor, there will be little shortage of donations for a noble cause.

In conclusion, while landmines remain an ever-present threat to peace and global security, the campaign against them grows stronger every year.

A CALL TO DISARM

(By Nikolaus Matthias Schiffman, Santa Barbara, CA)

Recently, much international attention has focused upon the possibility of the instillation of a worldwide ban on the production and utilization of antipersonnel mines. Not too long ago, the general consensus of the people of the world was that landmines were a horrific yet necessary part of military warfare; however—partly due to the recent developments in Somalia—people's general awareness of the devastation and hardship caused by landmines has greatly increased, and, thanks to the efforts of the United Nations and many other non-governmental organizations, the prospect of the complete elimination of landmines no longer seems like a utopian ideal, but instead, a realistic goal to work towards for the year 2000 (a). As an economic and military superpower, it is imperative that the United States assumes a leading role in the United Nations' continuing efforts to establish a ban on antipersonnel landmines.

It is estimated that every year, there are more than 25,000 incidents of people being killed or maimed by landmines, and in most of these cases, the victims are innocent civilians who are living in countries without sufficient medical facilities to deal with the injuries (b). Because of the sheer scope and frequency of these incidents, the United Nations are usually unable to be of direct assistance to the victims. Instead, many non-governmental organizations, such as the International Red Cross, play a key role in helping the victims of landmines. To this extent, many lives and limbs have been saved because a landmine victim was able to get medical help in time (c).

Working with other governments, the United Nations has helped to educate civilians about the dangers of landmines. For example, in January of 1996, the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs teamed up with the Government of Bosnia-Herzegovina to set up the Mine Action Programme. Plans like the Mine Action Programme devote time and money to educating and increasing people's awareness of landmines, to gathering information and data about the possible locations of landmines, to mechanically removing landmines, and to training specialists who can remove the mines (d). Without programs such as these, the situation with landmines would be much worse than it is today. The United Nations has provided great assistance to countries like Cambodia that lack the technology to properly deal with the problem (e). However, these efforts are not enough. Something else must be done.

Every day, more landmines are planted in the earth than are removed (f). As long as

countries continue producing and planting landmines, people—innocent civilians—will continue to get blown up by them. The casualties and fatalities resulting from landmines will not go away until a worldwide prohibition is put into effect. Some countries, including the United States, have been reluctant to endorse a total ban on landmines, claiming that landmines hold an important role in military warfare. Defense Secretary William Perry said in April of 1996 that the use of antipersonnel landmines by American troops facing North Korea have helped to prevent war (g). However, Perry's logic is a bit self-defeating. Every landmine planted in South Korean soil will come up again sometime, at the possible cost of a human life, and despite the cheap production costs of landmines, which can be purchased for as little as three dollars each, they are much more expensive to remove. The cost of removing a single landmine can exceed one thousand dollars (f). Surely, there must be military alternatives to the use of landmines.

Recently, the United States has been making some indications that it is willing to support a total ban on landmines. On January 20, 1997, President Clinton announced that he will be pursuing a total ban on landmines through a United Nations conference rather than through an outside summit or conference. In this way, it is more likely that certain countries, such as China and Russia, that have been reluctant to agree to a worldwide ban on landmines will be more likely to sign a treaty in agreement (g).

As the strongest military power in the world, the full support and leadership of the United States is necessary if a worldwide ban on landmines is to occur. Canada showed such leadership when it hosted the Ottawa Conference in October of 1996, and hopefully, in the future the United States will make similar gestures in an effort to curb the production of landmines (h). If significant progress is made in the next year, it is possible that we may see all legal production of landmines cease before the next millennium.

The United Nations plays a major role in helping to reduce the destructive effects of landmines. Working with individual governments, agencies such as the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the UN Department of Humanitarian affairs have provided healthcare and education to the people at risk from landmines. As more and more are becoming aware of the senselessness of landmines, the United Nations is gaining support in its quest to achieve a ban on the terrible weapon.

Eventually, a ban on landmines will be enacted. However, as history tends to repeat itself, it is important that the nations of the world learn from their mistakes, and one can only hope that when the next cruel, senseless weapon comes around, we will have the wisdom and the courage to stop its carnage before it starts.

THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ELIMINATION OF LAND MINES

(By Geren, Piltz, Carpenteria, CA)

Globally, it is frightening to think that nuclear land mines are in development. Looking back in history we learn that the land mine, an important weapon of World War II, was an encased explosive charge sometimes laid on the surface of the ground, but usually buried just below the surface. It was triggered by the weight of a passing vehicle or men, by the passage of time, or by remote control. The case is generally circular or square, made of metal or, to combat the magnetic detector, of wood, cardboard, glass or plastics. There are two types of mines: the antitank, to immobilize tanks

and other vehicles, and the antipersonnel, to kill soldiers.

The ancestor of the antitank mine was the artillery shell, buried by the Germans late in World War I to stop British tanks. The antitank mines were developed in Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States between 1919 and 1939. They usually contained only five or six pounds of TNT. They could stop a light tank, but had to be used in twos or threes against anything heavier. The true antitank mine, and the first antipersonnel mine, appeared early in World War II. It was an economical way of stopping an enemy or restricting his movements. In 1943 it had become a standard form of warfare. In the Korean War, both the North Korean and the United Nations armies used land mines extensively. In the Vietnam War, the Claymore mine came into general use. Claymores are made of plastic and are small and light. They contain a high-explosive substance and metal pellets that can be aimed in any direction and which have a range of 250 ft. The Claymore can be pushed into the ground or hung from trees, about 36 in. off the ground. A trip wire sets off the charge. Today, a standard U.S. army antitank mine contains between 6 and 12 lbs. of TNT.

The antipersonnel mine is also triggered by weight. They generally contain from 1 to 4 lbs. of explosives and can blow off a man's hand or foot or kill him with flying fragments. They may be a one-stage, simple blast type that explodes in place, or a two-stage fragmentation mine that first fires a container into the air, and then releases a fragmenting explosive charge.

It is time to eradicate all land mines before they do the same to us. Accidents are all too common since a land mine is detonated by disturbing a trip-wire attachment to the mine, or by a delayed-action mechanism. Innocent men and women, whose lives, safety, and freedom we are defending, are being threatened by land mines. And what about the children? Their roads and playing fields are strewn with land mines. Curious, and adventurous, kids wander unknowingly into dangerous situations. Millions of children throughout the world suffer needlessly from lack of food, water and medical care, as billions of dollars are spent on armaments. We take steps to immunize children from diseases, yet we expose them to the possibility of death on their own playgrounds. It has been said that human beings are the softest and weakest targets in war. The innocent always seem to suffer. Our world leaders seem so busy with the vast game of politics that they are forgetting the reason nations and governments exist: to insure the survival of people, to protect their children, to prevent terror. Why gamble with our children and with future generations? Unfortunately, throughout history, nations have sought security by gathering the most powerful weapons available, or so it seems. Land mines do not make us any more secure.

With today's technology, we see a grotesque collection of chemical and biological weapons. Land mines pollute the environment with chemical leakage as well as heavy metals. Recovery is expensive and often not very effective. We need everyone's commitment to eliminate land mines. Everyone is affected by, and can affect, public policies. Serious dialogue can keep alive the basic nerves of our democratic society. As a voice of today's young people, I am actively involved in making our society healthier. If the nerves of a people are dead, then their political vitality is sapped. My own view is, as a conscientious human being, that all warfare is senseless and that young and old alike should look carefully at present strategies for national and world security. We are capable of better protecting our people by

taking global action. I hope to see the day when national security is not measured in military terms. As Americans we have built a dynamic and prosperous society, yet we seem unable to think of, or work for alternatives to war. Conflicts such as war can be solved peacefully. Everyone wants to live. Everyone loves their children. Small steps are important because they can have far-reaching effects. Challenge the experts. Land Mines: we can LIVE without them.

THE COURAGE TO STAND ALONE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have this unexpected opportunity at this time of the day to rise and share an occasion with my colleagues. Yesterday, May 13, marked the publication of a book, "The Courage to Stand Alone," by Wei Jingsheng.

For those of our colleagues who are not familiar with Wei Jingsheng, he has been called the Sakarov of China. His book, "The Courage to Stand Alone," is a compilation of some of his previous writings, some earlier from prison and letters that he has written. He is a full-fledged world class champion for democracy. He received, in 1994, the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award. Last year he received the Sakarov award from the European Parliament.

Mr. Wei Jingsheng was sent to jail in 1979 following his peaceful writings about human rights and democratic freedoms. He served nearly 14 years in prison, and then about the time that the Chinese Government was trying to court the Olympics, Mr. Wei Jingsheng was released, only to be re-arrested after the Olympic decision was made.

Mr. Wei Jingsheng was then re-arrested following a meeting that he had with Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, John Shattuck. At the time the Chinese Government said that Mr. Wei Jingsheng was arrested for revealing state secrets. The state secret he revealed was to tell a foreign journalist something that had already appeared in the Chinese newspapers. In any event, he has gone back to prison for at least another 14-year sentence.

For most of the time that he has been in prison, about 18 years now, he has been in solitary confinement. The only other people around him from time to time are other prisoners whose duty it is for the Chinese regime to taunt Mr. Wei Jingsheng.

Mr. Wei Jingsheng has written the way the Founding Fathers of our country have written about democratic freedoms being written on the hearts of men. He has done this courageously. He continues to be arrested and re-arrested because he will not recant. He has spoken out against the repressive policies of the regime under Deng Xiaoping and continues not to recant even following the death of Deng.

As I have said, he is a great champion of democracy. I hold his courage