

NAPSNet Daily Report 17 September, 1997

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I. United States

1. Four-Party Peace Talks

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3. US Position on Landmine Ban

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The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("U.S. CLINTON WON'T ENDORSE LAND MINE TREATY," Washington, 9/17/97) reported that shortly after the treaty to create an immediate and total ban on anti-personnel mines was approved by acclamation in Oslo, presidential spokesman Mike McCurry said the US would not be a signatory because, although President Clinton supports the ban, it does not include several exceptions the US requires. McCurry said Wednesday, "We are determined to continue to press for the eradication of anti-personnel landmines. We regret that the document emerging from Oslo ... will not meet some of the necessary precautions that the United States insists upon as we make the transition to a landmine-free globe."

US President Clinton ("CLINTON REMARKS ON LANDMINES SEPTEMBER 17," USIA Transcript, 9/17/97) explained the US refusal to sign the landmine ban treaty reached in Oslo and announced a series of steps that the US "will take on its own to advance" US efforts "to rid the world of landmines." Clinton said the absence of recognition in the treaty for the continuing US need for landmines in the Korean peninsula was a key sticking point. Clinton stated: "There, our 37,000 troops and their South Korean allies face an army of one million North Koreans only 27 miles away from Seoul, Korea. ... In the event of an attack, the North's overwhelming numerical advantage can only be countered if we can slow down its advance, call in reinforcements and organize our defense. Our antipersonnel mines there are a key part of our defense line in Korea. They are deployed along a DMZ where there are no villages and no civilians, [and so] are not creating the problem we are trying to address in the world." Among the unilateral initiatives the US would be taking instead, Clinton announced that the US would develop alternative technologies of defense that would eliminate the need for landmines in Korea by 2006, "the time period for which we were negotiating in Oslo. ... In short, this program will eliminate all antipersonnel landmines from America's arsenal."

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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