



Press Release - For Immediate Release

US: Ban Landmine Use Everywhere, Korea Included 20th Anniversary of President Clinton's call for their "eventual elimination"

(Washington DC, September 23, 2014) Today's [announcement](#) by the United States that it will not use antipersonnel landmines anywhere in the world except on the Korean Peninsula is a positive step, but the geographic exception must be overcome if the US is to ever join the Mine Ban Treaty, said the US Campaign to Ban Landmines.

The US policy announced [September 23](#) commits the United States to not use antipersonnel landmines outside of the Korean Peninsula and commits it to destroy antipersonnel mine stockpiles "not required for the defense of the Republic of Korea." This affirms the de facto US policy against any antipersonnel mine use that has existed since 1991. Yet these indiscriminate weapons pose a danger to civilians no matter where they are used and further use of antipersonnel mines on the Korean Peninsula cannot be justified under any circumstances.

During the 1997 negotiation of the Mine Ban Treaty, the US tried to get a geographic exception for Korea, but was strongly rebuffed by its closest military allies, which concluded that the humanitarian dangers of such mines outweighed any military utility and that permitting one geographic exception would encourage other nations to seek similar exemptions from the ban treaty.

Today's policy announcement also committed the US to not assist, encourage, or induce other nations to use, stockpile, produce or transfer antipersonnel mines outside of Korea. The White House announcement notes that all NATO member states except the US are now party to the Mine Ban Treaty. A total of 162 nations are party to the treaty, which prohibits antipersonnel landmines, requires the destruction of stockpiled mines, and requires clearance of contaminated land and assistance to victims.

Today's White House announcement was made on the eve of the 20-year anniversary of President Clinton's [1994 speech](#) to the United Nations General Assembly when he became the first world leader to call for the "eventual elimination" of antipersonnel landmines.

Previously, on [June 27](#) at the Third Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty in Maputo, Mozambique, the US announced an immediate ban on the production and acquisition of antipersonnel mines, but did not address use of the weapons. In both policy announcements, the US has confirmed it is "diligently pursuing ... solutions that would be compliant" with the Mine Ban Treaty and "that would ultimately allow us to accede" to it.

The US Campaign to Ban Landmines has repeatedly urged that the outcome of the policy review initiated in 2009 be a decision to join the Mine Ban Treaty as soon as possible, to

immediately prohibit the use of antipersonnel mines, and to begin destruction of all stocks of antipersonnel mines. The US Campaign to Ban Landmines reiterated this call in a [September 12 letter](#) to President Obama.

According to US officials, the policy announced today does not represent the final outcome of the landmine policy review initiated by the Obama administration in 2009, but is an interim announcement. The US Department of Defense is currently conducting a detailed study into alternatives to self-destructing antipersonnel mines and the impact of no further use of the weapon on the Korean Peninsula.

The US has a stockpile of about 3 million antipersonnel mines.

The United States Campaign to Ban Landmines is a coalition of more than 400 non-governmental organizations. It is the US affiliate of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, co-laureate with former ICBL Coordinator Jody Williams of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.

According to the White House announcement, the new policy will “bring U.S. practice in closer alignment with a global humanitarian movement that has had a demonstrated positive impact in reducing civilian casualties” from antipersonnel landmines.

For more information, see:

- US Campaign to Ban Landmines letter to President Obama, September 12, 2014: [http://www.uscbl.org/fileadmin/content/images/Letters/USCBL Letter to Obama 12 Sep2014.pdf](http://www.uscbl.org/fileadmin/content/images/Letters/USCBL_Letter_to_Obama_12_Sep2014.pdf)

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