

signatories, including every NATO country, except the United States and Turkey, and every Western Hemisphere country, except the United States and Cuba.

Mr. President, this is a historic achievement. It is, I am told, by far the shortest period of time that any humanitarian law or arms control treaty has come into force. It is indicative of the tremendous sense of urgency and determination that has grown around the world to stop the carnage caused by landmines.

But more than anything, it is a tribute to Minister Axworthy, the Government of Canada, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, landmine survivors, and all the other governments, the U.N. Secretary General, and U.N. agencies like UNICEF and UNDP. It indicates the commitment of people like the late Princess Diana, Queen Noor of Jordan, the former coordinator of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Jody Williams, and so many others who have worked so hard to end this scourge.

The treaty's significance is in its simplicity. It establishes a new, unambiguous international norm. The 20th century saw large portions of the globe contaminated by landmines. Two days ago, a process was formally set in motion to reverse that legacy in the first years of the next century. It is a gift to the next generation, and generations beyond.

The treaty is a beginning. There are still many millions of mines buried in the ground waiting to be triggered by an innocent footstep or a curious child. Many of the treaty's signatories were once producers, exporters and users of landmines. They are no longer. The parties to the treaty have also pledged to get rid of the mines in the ground, and the United States, to its credit, and many other governments and organizations are already hard at work at demining.

I had hoped that the United States would be among the 40 original parties to the treaty. That was not to be, but I have no doubt that the United States will yet sign, and I resolve to work with the administration to reach that goal as soon as possible.

Mr. President, I have traveled throughout the world and have seen the damage caused by landmines. I have been impressed by the dedication of Tim Rieser in my own office who has given so much of himself to this. My wife is a registered nurse, and she has gone into the hospitals and to the clinics run and funded by the Leahy War Victims Fund. She, too, has seen the damage caused by landmines.

This is a weapon that is often used against civilians. It is a weapon that stays in the ground long after the peace agreements are signed, the armies have left the field and the soldiers have been disarmed. It is a weapon that waits for its victim to pull the trigger by stepping on it, stumbling on it or brushing up against it. It is a weapon

that is no longer needed, certainly not by the United States, the most powerful nation on Earth.

We have to understand that in the end, whether it is a child in Honduras, a farmer in Mozambique, or an American peacekeeper in Bosnia, we all stand to gain in a world in which landmines are banned and their use is a war crime.

Mr. President, I have been privileged to do many things in my time as a Member of the U.S. Senate on issues that involve us both domestically and worldwide. It is hard to think of anything that has been more of a privilege than working on the landmine issue. Certainly nothing has made me more proud than authoring the first piece of legislation passed anywhere in the world banning the export of landmines—the export moratorium.

Today, Mr. President, I compliment those who have gotten us this far. As I told Minister Axworthy when I talked to him on the phone a couple evenings ago, we would not be here if he had not made the brave, bold move that he did in Ottawa in 1996. I still recall the reaction when Lloyd Axworthy launched the treaty effort in the Fall of 1996. He said, "Let us come back in a year with a landmine treaty." Indeed, they did. Indeed, that is where the world is now. Indeed, we are all better for it.

Mr. President, I see nobody else seeking recognition, so I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMPLIMENTING SENATORS RICK SANTORUM AND BOB SMITH

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I wish to compliment my colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator SANTORUM, for his leadership in trying to override the President's veto of the partial-birth abortion ban; also, Senator BOB SMITH from New Hampshire. Both of those individuals put a lot of energy, a lot of their heart, in an effort to overturn a very cruel practice which, unfortunately, continues today because of the President's veto.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. I ask the Senator, how long do you intend to speak?

Mr. BAUCUS. Very, very short, I say to my friend from New Mexico—4 or 5 minutes.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank the Senator very much.

ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY ACT

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I would like to report briefly on the effort to bring up the Endangered Species Recovery Act, S. 1180.

When we were debating the Interior appropriations bill on Wednesday, Senator KEMPTHORNE, the Senator from Idaho, indicated that he planned to offer an amendment that would largely embody the substance of S. 1180.

I strongly support S. 1180. But we are no longer considering the Interior appropriations bill, and it is not clear whether we will again. I think the far better approach is to take up S. 1180 as a freestanding bill. After all, that bill was reported on October 31, 1997, almost 1 year ago. It is a solid bill, it is balanced, it is good for endangered species, and it is good for private landowners. It has bipartisan support. The vote in the Environment and Public Works Committee was 15-3. The bill was supported by every Republican member of the committee and by a majority of the Democratic members. The bill is also strongly supported by the Clinton administration.

To my mind, there is no good reason why we cannot bring up S. 1180 for debate on the Senate floor. Moreover, that approach has two important advantages over trying to attach it to the Interior appropriations bill.

First, we do not have the Interior appropriations bill. That is one big difficulty. In addition, bringing up S. 1180 as a freestanding bill assures full and fair debate and an opportunity for amendments. We are likely to get amendments from the left, from the right, from the middle, and who knows where. I am sure that we can work out most of them.

Of course, I will oppose amendments that would disrupt the balance of the bill. That is the agreement I reached with Senator KEMPTHORNE and Senator CHAFEE, Interior Secretary Babbitt, those of us who put this bill together; that is, oppose amendments that would disrupt the balance achieved in the bill. But every Senator should have a shot. In the end, such a process, I believe, will increase support for the bill.

In addition, this approach—bringing it up as a freestanding bill—assures that the bill will be taken up under the leadership and jurisdiction of the Environment and Public Works Committee, and that includes any conference with the House.

Members of the committee have worked long and worked hard—over several years, I might add—to develop this legislation. We should follow through rather than hand the bill off to an Appropriations Committee that is already bearing such heavy burdens as the fiscal clock winds down.

S. 1180, I say to my good friend, the Presiding Officer, is on the calendar. Here is the calendar. S. 1180 is on it. It has been on the calendar for almost a year. It is a good bill. We can be proud of it. We should take it up as a freestanding bill.

So where do things stand today? Yesterday, both Cloakrooms asked Senators whether they wished to offer any amendments. On our side there are about 20. I am now beginning to review the amendments and discuss them with Members and their staff to see if we can reduce that number. The majority is doing the same.

It is my hope, Mr. President, that, working with the chairman of the committee, Senator CHAFEE, and the majority and minority leaders, we will be in a position to bring the bill up, for debate and for amendment, within a matter of days. For my part, I will do whatever I can to make this possible.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE—ELIMINATING TONS OF WEAPONS GRADE PLUTONIUM

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I traveled to the recent Summit meeting in Moscow. At that Summit, a protocol was signed that will, if successfully implemented, safeguard 50 tons of Russian weapons-grade plutonium and transform it into new forms that should ensure that it is never again used in nuclear weapons.

I've placed special emphasis on this agreement for many months, and I invested a great deal of personal effort to achieve success. I welcome these recent steps. At the same time, I recognize that this protocol only creates an opportunity for real progress, we have to go far beyond just signing the protocol to secure the benefits that it can provide.

I've spoken out in the past on the need to ensure that Russian stocks of weapons-grade materials do not find their way to terrorists or rogue states. The current financial crisis in Russia only adds further emphasis to these concerns. The former Soviet Union relied on guards and guns to safeguard their fissile materials. Now those guards may not have been paid for months—that has to increase our concerns. At the Summit we certainly heard about the tremendous burdens being borne by the Russian people from the current economic uncertainties and rampant inflation.

Some programs already exist to improve the protection of nuclear materials. The Materials Protection Control and Accounting program is demonstrating some real successes in improving this situation. But the current opportunity to remove 50 tons of weap-

ons-grade material from potential weapons use is most unique. I've worked to be sure that we quickly seize it. In fact, my visit to Russia in July with Senators THOMPSON and GRAMS was motivated largely by my interest in finding ways to progress more rapidly with this 50 tons.

After that visit in July, I spoke with you about my misgivings with the Administration's plan to couple the rate of weapons dismantlement to the rate at which the weapons-grade plutonium could be used in reactors, as mixed-oxide or MOX fuel. At that time, the Administration was planning for Russia to use about 1.3 tons of this material per year in a set of Russian reactors. I argued that this was far too slow a rate. It would take 35 years to dispose of the 50 tons at that rate—none of us can be the least bit sure that the current window of opportunity for progress with Russia will stay open anywhere near that long.

In July, I proposed that we structure an agreement that decouples the initial steps in dismantlement from the final step of reactor use. Specifically, I believed that the Russians would accept a program that targets a goal for moving 10 tons per year of weapons-grade plutonium through the weapons dismantlement step, through conversion of classified shapes into unclassified ones, and into safeguarded storage. These steps have the effect of significantly reducing the risk that this material will be re-used in weapons.

We still need to proceed with the final disposition of the Russian plutonium in reactors, and I want to accomplish that step as rapidly as possible as part of our overall integrated program on plutonium disposition. But construction of MOX fuel fabrication facilities, plus limitations on the number of reactors in Russia that can accept MOX fuel, will lead to slower progress for this final step.

I discussed this approach with President Clinton in late July and encouraged that plutonium disposition be a focus of his next Summit. I appreciate his willingness to include this subject at the Moscow meetings.

I've just recently corresponded again with the President to outline my suggestions on key principles that should guide our negotiations of the detailed agreements required to implement the new plutonium disposition protocol. In that letter, I repeated my strong advice that he appoint a special envoy charged with the entire plutonium disposition effort. This program requires coordination across multiple federal agencies, as well as negotiations with Russia and the G-7 countries. In my view, an envoy who commands domestic and international respect, and who clearly has Presidential authority, is essential to expedite success.

I listed six key negotiating points in my letter to the President. First, I emphasized that agreements must focus on rapid progress for the initial steps of the process, the dismantlement, con-

version of classified shapes, and the safeguarded storage. These steps can and should be targeted at a rate of 10 tons per year.

Second, all milestones that we establish to gauge progress must include sufficient transparency that we can be positive that agreed-upon steps are accomplished.

Third, Russian plutonium must eventually be used in MOX fuel, but the rate for this step will be much slower than 10 tons per year. Nevertheless, we need to make progress toward this ultimate goal and this step must be part of the overall integrated program. I also noted that in my conversations with Russian leadership, they are very sensitive to achieving the best utilization of their plutonium. They believe that new generations of reactors can best utilize some of their plutonium. I believe that we should respect their interests, as long as the weapons material is always stored under effective safeguards while awaiting eventual use.

Fourth, we should minimize the construction of new Russian facilities. We should seek and perhaps help to convert some existing Russian facilities. For example, some of their weapon production facilities should be converted to weapon dismantlement.

Fifth, it is important to involve the other G-7 countries. Plutonium represents a global risk prior to disposition and careful disposition of plutonium is a global benefit. For that reason, we should encourage meaningful participation from our G-7 friends as we work together on these goals.

And finally, we should assure that any U.S. resources that subsidize the Russian Federation's program are provided only upon assurance that tasks and milestones were satisfactorily completed.

It will be a challenge to negotiate agreements that follow these six points, but it is essential that we promptly start serious negotiations. I'm pleased to be informed by the Administration that the first discussions with the Russians on this subject will occur very soon.

In closing, I want to note that this current emphasis on disposition of excess weapons materials is only one action in what I hope will be a long series of important steps toward dramatic reductions in global risks and tensions. This agreement is important, but it has to be followed by more agreements. Each of these subsequent agreements must be carefully and fully implemented, and should target further reductions in the large world-wide stocks of weapons materials.

In order to achieve these reductions, new agreements have to be in place to inventory global sources of fissile materials; and obviously all nations will eventually have to participate to achieve real success. Other future agreements need to provide reliable counts of actual warheads, and eventually to dramatic reductions in the numbers of such warheads.