

conjunction with anti-tank mines.

President Clinton should reject both of these demands. Achieving an effective global mine treaty is a prime American interest. Preventing needless military and civilian casualties should take precedence over sparing the Pentagon the trouble of adjusting its contingency plans. These plans can be modified to conform to a land mine ban without compromising American security.

The case for a Korean exception is based on longstanding American plans to use land mines to slow a North Korean ground invasion of the South. Yet military analysts, including a former commander of United States troops in South Korea, Gen. James Hollingsworth, now argue that such use would be "a game plan for disaster," leading to unnecessary casualties among American troops and South Korean civilians.

The other exception the Pentagon wants would expand a provision in the present draft treaty that allows the deployment of some anti-personnel mines, under carefully circumscribed provisions, to protect anti-tank mines against tampering. Washington wants this loophole expanded so that it can continue to use an existing weapons system that airdrops anti-tank and anti-personnel mines together. The better solution would be to design new combination mining systems that do not require renegotiating the draft treaty.

If the United States persists in demanding the two exceptions, other countries will have no trouble finding comparable loopholes of their own. The coalition of veterans, activists and legislators that helped bring the Administration this far should sustain its efforts until Mr. Clinton stands up to the Pentagon's needless demands. The chance to save so many lives should not be further delayed.

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