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.