

CONGRATULATING THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS FIRM STAND DURING THE OSLO LAND MINE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, yesterday, President Clinton held a press conference in which he outlined his reasons for refusing to sign onto the Oslo Land Mine Treaty. As my colleagues know, this treaty is intended to eliminate the horrible and very real carnage thrust on people of war torn countries by abandoned and old-fashioned land mines. The President said that the refusal of the signatories to consider our Nation's security requirements with regard to our use of self-deactivating, so-called smart mines, and our obligations to the defense of our loyal South Korean allies, represented a line which he simply could not cross for the good of the Nation.

Honesty compels me to speak out when I disagree. It also demands that I recognize a person when he is right without regard to which side of the aisle he may occupy. I rise today to commend the President's act of courage in refusing to sign the Oslo Treaty, and for being willing to stand up and say we need to protect our soldiers when they have to be in the field. As we all know, the pressure on him to sign—especially during the last several weeks—has been worldwide, relentless, and most intense—even from his own party.

Thankfully for our troops, the President understands the danger of taking this defensive weapon away from them. Thankfully for our troops, the President understands the importance of land mines to the defense of the hottest spot on the globe today—the Korean Peninsula. Thankfully for our troops, the President understands that taking smart mines away will not help one person in any mine-infested country in the world. Thankfully for our troops, the President understands that you simply cannot legislate the horror out of war.

I commend President Clinton for his exercise of good judgment in the face of overwhelming public pressure to do otherwise. I also commend the Joint Chiefs of Staff and all the many generals and admirals, both retired and active duty, including Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, who have made their opposition to this treaty known. I commend so many of my colleagues who, during recent meetings with Canadian lawmakers, expressed their support for the President's efforts. Finally, I commend Secretary of Defense Cohen, for his wise counsel.

Regrettably, the effort to take this necessary defensive weapon away from our troops is still active. There is still legislation proposed that would do exactly that. But yesterday a battle was won in that struggle, and every American soldier, current and future, who might ever have to go into harm's way, and each mother, father, son, and daughter owes our President a debt of gratitude. He did the right thing for our country.

ABUSIVE AND EXPLOITATIVE CHILD LABOR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about an important issue, child labor. Over the years, I have come to this floor many times to speak about abusive and exploitative child labor and have introduced legislation to combat it.

But today I am here to specifically raise awareness about child servitude and to speak out against this horrific practice. Several years ago, the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude (SAACS) based in New Delhi, India, began to devote this day, September 18, to raising awareness about children forced to work. I would like to take a moment to talk about SAACS and their endeavors under the leadership of my good friend, Kailash Satiyarti. In April of this year, I visited Mukti Ashram or liberation retreat established by SAACS which is located outside of New Delhi. This is a place where bonded child laborers are freed from the shackles of slavery and are able to attend school, learn a trade and most importantly to regain their self-worth. I was deeply moved by these children and impressed by their progress in overcoming their previous circumstances.

Mr. President, I want to be clear. I am not talking about children who work part-time after school or on weekends. There's nothing wrong with that. I worked in my youth—perhaps so did you. That is not the issue.

The issue is children who are forced to work in hazardous environments—many under slave-like conditions who sweat long hours for little or no pay and are thus denied education or the opportunity to grow and develop. It's the kind of work that endangers a child's physical and emotional well-being.

And let there be no mistake: When the growth of children is stopped so is the growth of a nation.

I would also like to take a moment to remember a former child laborer whose life was ended but whose message still resonates throughout the world. His name was Iqbal Masih. He was sold into slavery at age of 4. He was shackled to the carpet looms to slave 14 hours a day, 6 days a week for 6 long years. Until, he broke free.

But instead of turning away from the hell that was his life, Iqbal did the opposite. He brought his world to us. He showed us things we didn't want to see. He told us things we didn't want to hear. And he challenged us, when he said "the world's enslaved children are your responsibility." Iqbal Masih was a leader and a crusader, sadly, he was assassinated on April 16, 1995. At the age of 13, his voice was silenced. We remember him today and the hundreds of millions of children who toil away and remember them in the best way possible—by keeping his message alive and his crusade going strong.

As I mentioned earlier, I traveled to South Asia in April and laid a wreath

at Iqbal's grave in Pakistan. I also visited the school in Kasur that was built in Iqbal's memory with the support of students from the Broad Meadows School in Quincy, MA and donations from children throughout the United States.

Throughout my visit to South Asia, I carried the same message everywhere I went and to anyone who would listen: child labor is a big concern in the United States and that concern is not going to go away. I am going to continue to work hard to make sure that it's on the agenda in Congress, at the United Nations next month, and at the ILO.

The definition of child labor is not an American standard—it is an international one. ILO Convention 138 is clear. The minimum age for employment is 15 years—developing countries may invoke a transitional age of 14—and 18 years is the minimum for hazardous work.

Virtually every nation on Earth has similar laws on its books today. So let me put to rest the notion that somehow this is the "West" imposing its will on others. These are not the West's standards. These are the world's standards.

And the fact is, some of the most powerful calls for the elimination of child labor have been sounded from the governments of the developing world. The Delhi Declaration, adopted in 1995, includes a strongly worded resolution on child labor. As does a resolution adopted at last year's ministerial conference of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation held in Pakistan.

I believe that it is our job to work together to transform the resolutions we adopt from words to deeds—from intentions to actions. And that is what I have committed much of my time and energy to doing.

In 1992, I introduced the Child Labor Deterrence Act, the most comprehensive legislative initiative in the United States to end abusive and exploitative child labor. Some called it revolutionary legislation but, in truth, it is rooted in the most conservative of notions: International trade cannot ignore international values.

It is true that the vast majority of child laborers do not work in the export sector. And of course, the exploitation of children is deplorable under any circumstances. But, the reason I have focused on child labor in industries that export to the United States is that we need to begin somewhere. The export sector is an area where we have leverage and where we can try and effect some change now.

Since the time I began my effort, support has grown tremendously. As I have traveled around the United States and spoken with people about the issue of child labor, I have found that consumers want to get involved. They want information.

They want to know if products on the shelves are made by children. And they don't want to buy it if it is. A recent