

In doing so, he has earned more than just the pride and admiration of a loving wife. He has earned the respect of a grateful nation and the enduring thanks of millions of individuals he will never meet, but whose lives are better and richer and more productive because of him.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. DOLE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. DEWINE. Madam President, I rise this morning to discuss a bill I believe the Senate will be taking up later today or possibly tomorrow. But before I do, I cannot come to the floor this morning without commenting about the magnificent work and service that our service men and women are doing in Iraq, and also the service men and women who are supporting our folks in Iraq. What an absolutely tremendous job they are doing, and how proud all Americans are of the work they are doing.

We are having an opportunity in this war, unlike any previous war in American history, to see, sometimes firsthand, the tremendous work they are doing.

As I talk to people in Ohio, talk to my colleagues, and talk to family members and friends, everyone is so proud of what they are doing.

Our hearts go out to the families of those who have lost their lives. We pray for them. We pray for those who have been injured. We pray for those who are recovering. And we think about them. We think about them every day.

#### THE CLEAN DIAMOND ACT OF 2003

Mr. DEWINE. Madam President, later today the Senate will take up a bill that the House has acted upon; that is, the Clean Diamond Act of 2003. There are many tragedies in this world, a lot of suffering. This bill deals with one of these problems. There are many atrocities that are occurring.

One area of the world where such atrocities are occurring on a daily basis is in Sierra Leone, Africa. For at least a decade, Sierra Leone, one of the world's poorest nations, has been embroiled in a civil war. Rebel groups—most notably, the Revolutionary United Front—RUF—have been fighting for years to overthrow the recognized government. In the process, violence has erupted as the rebels have fought to seize control of the country's profitable diamond fields which, in turn, helps finance their terrorist regime.

Once in control of a diamond field, the rebels confiscate the diamonds and then launder them onto the very legitimate market through other nearby nations, such as Liberia. We refer to these as "conflict" or "blood" diamonds. These gems are a very lucrative business for the rebel groups. In fact, over the past decade, the rebels have smuggled out of Africa, we estimate, approximately \$10 billion in these diamonds.

It is nearly impossible, of course, to distinguish the illegally gathered diamonds from legitimate or "clean" stones. And so, Members of the Senate, regrettably and unwittingly, the United States—as the world's biggest buyer of diamonds—has contributed to the violence. Our Nation accounted for more than half of the \$57.5 billion in the global retail diamond trade last year, and some estimates suggest that illegal diamonds from Africa account for as much as 15 percent of the overall diamond trade.

Since the start of the rebel's quest for control of Sierra Leone's diamond supply, half of the nation's population of 4.5 million have left their homes, and at least a half million have fled the country. But it is the children, as it usually is—it is the children—of Sierra Leone who are bearing the biggest brunt of the rebel insurgency. For over 8 years, the RUF has conscripted children—children often as young as 7 or 8 years old—to be soldiers in this make-shift army. They have ripped at least 12,000 children from their own families.

As a result of deliberate and systematic brutalization, child soldiers have become some of the most vicious—and effective—fighters within the rebel factions. The rebel army—child-soldiers included—has terrorized Sierra Leone's population—killing, abducting, raping, and hacking off the limbs of victims with their machetes. This chopping off of limbs is the RUF's trademark strategy. In Freetown, the surgeons are frantic. Scores of men, women, and children—their hands partly chopped off—have flooded the main hospital. Amputating as quickly as they can, doctors toss severed hands into a communal bucket.

The RUF frequently and forcibly injects the children with cocaine in preparation for battle. This is a picture of a little girl who, obviously, has had her arm amputated.

In many cases, the rebels force the child-soldiers at gunpoint to kill their own family members or neighbors and friends. Not only are these children traumatized by what they are forced to do, they also are afraid to be reunited with their own families because of the possibility of retribution.

Madam President and members of the Senate, I cannot understate nor can I fully describe the horrific abuses these children are suffering. The most vivid accounts come from the child-soldiers themselves. I would like to read a few of their stories—their own stories—taken from Amnesty International's

1998 report entitled: "Sierra Leone—A Year of Atrocities against Civilians." According to one child's recollection:

Civilians were rounded up, in groups or in lines, and then taken individually to a pounding block in the village where their hands, arms, or legs were cut with a machete. In some villages, after the civilians were rounded up, they were stripped naked. Men were then ordered to rape members of their own family. If they refused, their arms were cut off and the women were raped by rebel forces, often in front of their husbands . . . victims of these atrocities also reported women and children being rounded up and locked into houses which were then set [on fire].

A young man from Lunsar, describing a rebel attack, said this:

Ten people were captured by the rebels and they asked us to form a [line]. My brother was removed from the [line], and they killed him with a rifle, and they cut his head with a knife. After this, they killed his pregnant wife. There was an argument among the rebels about the sex of the baby she was carrying, so they decided to open her stomach to see the baby.

According to Komba, a teenager:

My legs were cut with blades and cocaine was rubbed in the wounds. Afterwards, I felt like a big person. I saw the other people like chickens and rats. I wanted to kill them.

Rape, sexual slavery, and other forms of sexual abuse of girls and women have been systematic, organized, and widespread. Many of those abducted have been forced to become the "wives" of combatants.

According to Isatu, an abducted teenage girl:

I did not want to go; I was forced to go. They killed a lot of women who refused to go with them.

She was forced to become the sexual partner of the combatant who captured her and is now the mother of their 3-month-old baby:

When they capture young girls, you belong to the soldier who captured you. I was "married" to him.

Look at how some of these children have depicted themselves, the violence and bloodshed in their own drawings. That is how they depict it. Children strike at the heart of what they see and, more importantly, what they feel.

We are losing these children, an entire generation of children, if the situation is not improved. These kids have no future. But as long as the rebel diamond trade remains unchallenged, nothing really will change at all. That is why. I have been working with Senator DURBIN, Senator FEINGOLD, Senator GREGG, and so many others in the Senate and the other body for over 2 years to pass legislation that would help stem this illegal trade in conflict diamonds. I thank Senator GRASSLEY for his good work. Together we have worked extensively with our House colleagues, including my good friend and former colleague from Ohio, former Congressman Tony Hall. We have also worked with a champion in this area, my good friend, FRANK WOLF from Virginia.

We have worked to develop much needed legislation to help remove the