

Landmines: a deadly relic

◆ U.S. absent as 89 nations approve text of landmine ban

logo from International Campaign to Ban Landmines



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It is hard to imagine that a war was fought on this campus. During the Revolutionary War, Guilford College was a battlefield hospital. Except for the mass grave across the street in the cemetery at New Garden Friends Meeting, the physical effects of that war are no longer with us.

Recent wars do not die so quickly: landmines from World War I still explode in French fields, children playing in Cambodia are maimed and killed, Bosnians returning to their homes meet landmines in their front yards.

On September 18 in Oslo, Norway, 89 nations adopted the text of a treaty banning the manufacture and use of antipersonnel mines. Noticeably absent were the largest producers of landmines: the United States,

Russia, and China.

There are one hundred million uncleared landmines around the world which kill about 25,000 people a year. But unlike bullets or artillery shells, mines cannot be aimed.

Landmines are especially a problem in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Somalia. Many of these nations do not have the money to clear them. The United Nations has

estimated clearance costs of as much as \$1,000 per mine-about

100 times more than their cost of manufacture.

More than 50 countries have manufactured about 200 million antipersonnel landmines in the last 25 years. More than 350 different types of antipersonnel mines exist, including 3 types of mines that the US describes as "smart" land mines because they can be set. The US

tried to exempt these mines from the treaty.

Champions of the landmine ban range from the late Princess Diana to the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, one of over 800 human rights, peace, and children's rights groups from over 50 nations who have joined The International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

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ments to further the laws of war and to limit suffering. When

the United States chooses to join those preventing the development of this international law by opposing the treaty, the U.S. not only undermines the particular treaty but also makes it harder to reach future international agreements."

Another reason for American disagreement with the treaty was a vestige of the Cold

War: North Korea. As Guilford professor Dottie Borei explained, there are about 40,000 US troops protecting South Korea from Communist North Korea and there has never been an official treaty ending the Korean War.

Regarding this issue President Don McNemar said "The United States has other means of preventing aggression and could have given up the right to use land mines for this purpose. The United States has been active in promoting peaceful means of resolving conflicts between North and South Korea."

McNemar was in North Korea a year ago with a delegation of Quaker educators where he saw the need for peacemaking efforts. He indicated a small part that Guilford can play. "We were encouraging the North Koreans to send scholars to American colleges, and we hope that three North Korean scholars will come to Guilford this year. Exchanges of ideas and greater understanding among people, even people with dramatically different ideologies, can take away the need for landmines and encourage the peaceful resolution of issues."

Fast Facts

USA

WASHINGTON — An Internal Revenue Service agent told a Senate committee today the agency's management encourages many agents to pursue erroneous tax assessments against individuals who simply cannot fight back.

BOSTON — Science still has found no cure for the common cold. But help could be on the way for those suffering from the flu.

University of Virginia researchers say a new drug can

shorten the durations of symptoms experienced by those with the influenza virus by one to three days.

Researchers tested an experimental medicine made by Glaxo Wellcome. It blocks a protein that the influenza virus needs to grow and replicate.

ARLINGTON, Va. — The jury in the Marv Albert sexual assault trial was scheduled to hear from a second woman who tells a tale of similar abuse at the hands of the sportscaster.

Without the jury present, the woman described a sexual encounter with Albert in which he allegedly wore women's underwear and bit her neck, and she pulled off his toupee. The judge then granted a prosecution motion to allow the jury to hear from the witness.

WASHINGTON — Two major consumer groups are calling on federal regulators to slap an emergency freeze on cable television rates.

Consumers Union and the Consumer Federation of America

contend that cable T.V. rates are skyrocketing out of control at the fastest pace ever. The groups also want the Federal Communications Commission to overhaul its cable rate rules to hold down rates, and to set tougher curbs on the ownership of cable systems and programming.

The consumer groups are also demanding that the F.C.C. promote the distribution of cable programs to potential rivals, such as providers of satellite T.V. programming.

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