The United States of America fully recognizes the necessity to protect its civilians from the dangers of unexploded ordinance as established in the policy changes of September 2014. The policy stated that the United States will: “(1) not use APL (anti-personnel landmine) outside the Korean Peninsula; (2) not assist, encourage, or induce anyone outside the Korean Peninsula to engage in activity prohibited by the Ottawa Treaty; and (3) undertake to destroy APL stockpiles not required for the defense of the Republic of Korea” (U.S. 1). Former President Barack Obama said the US is, “‘diligently pursuing other solutions that would be compliant’ with the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty,” (Human 1) which aims at the global elimination of APL.

The United States delegation stated in June 2014 that the U.S. would cease production and attainment of any anti-personnel munitions not compliant with the Ottawa Treaty. These statements followed the U.S. government policy of discontinuation regarding the replacing of such munitions. Such advancements towards limiting all such dangers of unexploded ordinance have brought the United States closer to coinciding fully with the Ottawa Treaty. This followed the initial signing of the Treaty that the United States was not a part of, along with such countries as Russia and China.
Landmine Monitor, a research program regarding research and monitoring for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC), recorded a total of 73,576 casualties from landmines in the years of 1999-2009 (Landmine 1). Thousands of innocent civilians are injured and killed by unexploded landmines left in war-torn countries every year, most notably in Egypt, Iran, and Afghanistan. Many countries similar to those stated have neither ratified or succeeded the Ottawa Treaty. However, with influences from major countries such as the United States, these countries may adopt similar policies to help eliminate such dangerous unexploded ordinance.

According to the general obligations of the Ottawa Treaty in Article 1, each participating state party will, “never under any circumstances (a) use anti-personnel mines; (b) develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, anti-personnel mines; (c) To assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Convention,” (United 3). Although the United States had originally declined to sign the treaty, the government's recent actions represent a distinct change in policy regarding use of anti-personnel mines. Former President Barack Obama led the most recent change in policy regarding landmines, adopting ideals that fit closely with the principles first established in the Ottawa Treaty.
While the U.S. has continued to put forth a strong effort towards reducing the impact of landmines around the world, there is one exception: the Korean Peninsula. The U.S. government will not make any sort of changes regarding landmine policy in and around the Peninsula because of the continuing conflict between North and South Korea. The government has stated that such changes would risk more lives than protect, limiting more of the assistance granted to the South Korean government and military. Any military conflict regarding the Korean Peninsula involves both South Korea as well as the United States, therefore any changes made to landmine policy do not affect any area located on the Korean Peninsula.

The United States of America has shown its continued support of the Ottawa Treaty in the past two decades, making several significant changes to landmine policy, thus helping to decrease the number of casualties caused by landmines. Despite being forgotten by the global media and politics, unexploded ordinance is one of the most important problems in our world today. The United States will continue the fight against landmines, with the goal of saving thousands of innocent lives and creating a safer world for all.
Works Cited


