

# A SMALL SACRIFICE FOR SECURITY

Why Finland gave up its landmines

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## BACKGROUND

Finland joined the Antipersonnel (AP) Landmine Ban Treaty despite an overwhelming belief that their national defence doctrine depended upon the deployment of landmines, and the refusal of their neighbour Russia to participate. This decision appears to go against the core responsibility of government – to do all in its power to defend the territorial integrity of the state. But in fact, it reveals a more holistic sense of security, in which vital interests are seen as wrapped up in the wider interests of a strong and cohesive international community. This example has important parallels in the security and defence policies of other states. The belief that national security justifies the deployment of any weapon system that may harm international cohesion or threaten international security is not universally shared. National security is more than the capability to defend the realm.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AP</b>	Antipersonnel
<b>APL</b>	Antipersonnel Landmine
<b>ATT</b>	Arms Trade Treaty
<b>CCW</b>	The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
<b>CD</b>	Conference on Disarmament
<b>ICBL</b>	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NPT</b>	Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
<b>UAV</b>	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council

## ABBREVIATIONS USED FOR THE FINNISH POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE ORDER OF THEIR SHARE OF VOTES IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN 2015.

<b>KESK</b>	Centre Party
<b>KOK</b>	National Coalition Party
<b>PS</b>	Finns Party
<b>SDP</b>	Social Democratic Party
<b>VIHR</b>	Green League
<b>VAS</b>	Left Alliance
<b>RKP</b>	Swedish People's Party of Finland
<b>NUOR</b>	Young Finns Party (present in the Finnish parliament in 1995-1999)

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# I. INTRODUCTION

“If all the world’s states behaved like Finland, drafting a document like Ottawa Treaty would have never crossed anyone’s mind.”<sup>1</sup>

Finland found itself in an unusual position in late 1997. While the rest of the European Union supported the Ottawa Treaty for its humanitarian contribution, Finland’s opposition blocked EU consensus.<sup>2</sup> Finland had long portrayed itself as a humanitarian power, an exemplary member of the European Union and the wider international community. Its reluctance to relinquish its anti-personnel (AP) landmine stockpiles appeared to validate the conventional wisdom that humanitarian questions were secondary to national security considerations. For a non-aligned country with a land border with Russia over 1000km long, far in the European periphery, landmines were seen as a cheap and effective weapon system and played a central role in Finnish defence doctrine.

Finland justified its initial opposition by referring to its national security.<sup>3</sup> The long land border and tumultuous history with Russia together with the Russian non-participation in the Treaty were the most often cited arguments.<sup>4</sup> Yet the country signed the Ottawa Treaty in 2011, the last in the European Union and the 135th in the world.

The domestic debate started in earnest in 1997 and concluded 14 years later in a final vote in the Finnish Parliament in November 2011. It was generally accepted that alternative weapon systems and doctrines could not fully replace all the capabilities provided by antipersonnel landmines. From this fact alone one could conclude that the Finnish national security was weakened under international pressure.

On the contrary, this study suggests that Finland’s decision to abolish its landmines did not arise from a decision to diminish national security. All sides were committed to maintaining credible national defence capabilities. Instead, a broader definition for what national security means and how it could

be maintained and reinforced emerged and became more widely accepted. In effect, Finland considered the various multilateral and unilateral dimensions that affected its national security, and recognised that maintaining AP landmines would harm the ability of the international community to collaborate in tackling threats to international security. From this perspective, participation in the Ottawa Treaty would ensure that Finland was locked into a strengthened international rules-based system, allow Finland to retain its position as a responsible member of international community, and thereby strengthen its national security within this community.

This is the Finnish debate.

1. Jukka Tarkka (NUOR), Parliament of Finland (1998)
2. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction is known informally as the Ottawa Treaty or Ottawa Convention.
3. Lond, David & Hindle, Laird (1998), ‘Europe and the Ottawa process: An overview’, *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 79
4. Lond, David & Hindle, Laird (1998), p. 79

# I.I SUBSTANTIVE SUMMARY

The division within the Finnish political elite was largely static in terms of the party positions throughout the fourteen years.

Political parties on the left (the Social Democratic Party, the Left Party and the Green Party) were generally supportive of the landmine ban while the Centre Party and the National Coalition Party, on the centre and right respectively, were more cautious and internally divided. The Finns Party, a nationalist party difficult to position in the traditional left-right spectrum, was consistently the most critical.<sup>5</sup>

Opponents criticised the Ottawa Treaty as weakening Finland's territorial defence and national security. They pointed out that it was negotiated outside the United Nations framework, was not universally binding (Russia in particular was not a party) and relied on voluntary mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement. They argued that Finnish landmines were safely stored and would only ever be used defensively against an invading force, and that therefore the humanitarian objectives and ambitions of the Ottawa Treaty were not relevant to Finland. Finally, the process of destroying Finland's landmines and acquiring new capabilities would entail enormous expense, and would force the cancellation or rescheduling of other already planned modernisation initiatives. Opponents also referred to Finland's earlier wars and a difficult history with Russia in the 1930-40's, and to the universal support within the defence establishment for the unique capabilities AP landmines offered. They claimed that supporting the landmine ban was both irresponsible and unpatriotic.

Treaty proponents emphasised its humanitarian nature. They questioned the degree of military utility landmines offered to Finland and advocated a phased approach and additional military spending to develop and purchase new weapon systems to fill any gap in relevant capabilities. Their principal argument, however, was that membership of the Treaty was essential to Finland's international reputation and the long-term consistency of Finnish foreign policy, and that joining it would strengthen the rules-based international system and thus benefit Finland's security indirectly.

The debate over military utility was heavily polarized throughout the debate, but it was this last argument – a pronounced preference of multilateral over unilateral approaches to national security – that allowed the pro-ban faction to maintain and strengthen its leading position. It is from this dimension of the story that other countries can also learn a great deal. When considering national security within an international environment and efforts to build a cohesive international society, the military utility of a weapon system has to be weighed against the damage it may cause to a country's ability to take a full part within the community and to the ability of the community to build effective norms and regimes that strengthen international security.

5. Until August 2011, the party was known in English as 'True Finns' but the name was changed due to claims that it was insulting towards non-party members.

# I.II TEMPORAL SUMMARY

The landmine debate kicked off in December 1997 when a commission set up by then President Tarja Halonen (Social Democratic Party) recommended that Finland should join the Ottawa Treaty by 2006 and abolish its mine stockpiles by 2010.<sup>6</sup>

Finland was already bound by the 1997 EU Council decision to ban production or export of landmines but it reserved the right to possess and deploy them. Cautious support for the humanitarian principles of the Ottawa Treaty was reaffirmed in the 2001 National Security and Defence Policy Review, but it emphasised that abolishing landmines must not risk credible national defence and that this question must be settled before any further decisions could be taken.<sup>7</sup> For this purpose, a dedicated non-partisan commission brought together both diplomatic and military officials with the mission of exploring alternative weapon systems, their costs and their suitability to Finland. In both its interim and final reports, published in 2003 and 2004 respectively, the military and diplomatic representatives were divided in their recommendations.

Following parliamentary debate, the 2004 National Security and Defence Policy Review formally committed Finland to joining the Ottawa Treaty but postponed the target year from 2006 to 2012 to allow the defence establishment more time to procure alternative capabilities.<sup>8</sup> For this purpose, the armed forces were granted additional 200 million Euro, over 100 million Euro short of the Defence Ministry request. These goals were again reaffirmed in the National Security and Defence Policy Review in 2009 and parliament adopted the necessary legislation on 25 November 2011, entering into force on 1 July 2012.<sup>9</sup> The process of abolishing the Finnish landmine stockpiles, totalling over one million mines but excluding those kept for training purposes, was concluded by the end of 2016.

6. Ministry of Defence (2003), Interim Report of the Working Group on Antipersonnel Landmine Question, (19 December), link accessed 10 July 2017, [http://www.defmin.fi/files/320/2525\\_1825\\_PuolustusministeriOn\\_JalkavAkimiinaselvitystyOryhmAn\\_vAliraportti\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.defmin.fi/files/320/2525_1825_PuolustusministeriOn_JalkavAkimiinaselvitystyOryhmAn_vAliraportti_1_.pdf)
7. Prime Minister's Office (2004), Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004, Government Report 6/2004, Prime Minister's Office Publications 18/2004, (24 September), link accessed 10 July 2017, [http://www.defmin.fi/files/311/2574\\_2160\\_English\\_White\\_paper\\_2004\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.defmin.fi/files/311/2574_2160_English_White_paper_2004_1_.pdf); Ministry of Defence (2004), Final Report of the Working Group on Antipersonnel Landmine Question, (14 July), link accessed 10 July 2017, [http://www.defmin.fi/files/317/2524\\_2074\\_JalkavAkimiinaselvitystyOryhmAn\\_loppuraportti\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.defmin.fi/files/317/2524_2074_JalkavAkimiinaselvitystyOryhmAn_loppuraportti_1_.pdf)
8. Prime Minister's Office (2004); Parliament of Finland (2004), Parliamentary Debate on the government proposal for the Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2004, (16 December), link accessed 10 July 2017, <https://www.edilex.fi/mt/puvm20040001#OT1>
9. Prime Minister's Office (2009), Finnish Security and Defense Policy 2009, Government Report, Prime Minister's Office Publications 13/2009, (5 February), link accessed 10 July 2017, [http://www.civcap.info/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Finland/gov\\_rep.pdf](http://www.civcap.info/fileadmin/user_upload/Finland/gov_rep.pdf); Parliament of Finland (2011), Parliamentary Debate on Government's legislative proposal for Finland to sign the Ottawa Treaty, (17 November), link accessed 10 July, <https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/vaski/sivut/trip.aspx?triptype=ValtiopaivaAsiakirjat&docid=PTK+71/2011+ke+p+1#>



# II. CONTEXT FOR THE FINNISH DEBATE

“Why do the Geneva additional protocols and the work done for their further development also in Finland mean absolutely nothing?”<sup>10</sup>

The intergovernmental negotiations on an AP landmine ban began in the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (CD). Established by United Nations in 1979 to replace the earlier Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, the CD operates by consensus, hosts all UN disarmament negotiations and currently consisting of 65 member states. In the early 1990s, as a result of heavy lobbying from the Handicap International and ICBL, the ban question was brought to the CD agenda by the French Government, which was able to convince other states to convene a conference to review the Protocol II (Mines, booby-traps and other devices) of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) adopted in 1980.<sup>11</sup> Supporting the French efforts, in 1994, the US State Department published an infamous report on the civilian suffering caused by landmines, and President Bill Clinton called for urgent action to ban them in his address to the UN General Assembly the same year.<sup>12</sup> As a result of the subsequent Review Conference on the Protocol II in Spring 1996, the participating states were able to agree on a number of amendments that would tighten the regulation with regards to AP landmines. Moreover, it raised awareness of the landmine question amongst national governments and the public and generated momentum for the ICBL's global campaign efforts.<sup>13</sup> However, it did not result in any comprehensive moves towards a ban.

According to the critics of the UN-led process, the main reasons for the failure to achieve a comprehensive ban treaty were the consensus-based decision-making process and the lack of a sufficiently strong global norm on landmines to prevent states from employing their vetoes.<sup>14</sup>

With its 65 participating states, the process was also not perceived as adequately representative of the parties most affected by AP landmines' negative consequences.<sup>15</sup> More specifically, the pro-ban states pointed out that the amended CCW, while now prohibiting the 'indiscriminate use' of landmines, also contained a dubious escape clause requiring 'feasible precautions...which are practicable or practically possible taking into account all the circumstances ruling at the time' that could render the newly adopted restrictions effectively meaningless.<sup>16</sup>

Although some participating states found the results of the Review Conference acceptable given the constraints of the CD, a group of states led by Canada quickly announced their ambition to negotiate a comprehensive ban treaty outside the UN framework.<sup>17</sup> The interested states met in Ottawa in October 1996 to discuss the treaty text, and the Canadian hosts declared that the negotiations would be concluded in the same place within twelve months. A year later the mine ban treaty, or the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction*, was signed in Ottawa on 3 December 1997 by 122 states. The ICBL and its coordinator Jody Williams were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in the same year.

While the Mine Ban Treaty gained momentum internationally, member states in the European Union were divided on the issue. The European Parliament had already called for a ban treaty in 1992 but this was not representative of early government positions, whose defence establishments generally remained sceptical.

Even in Belgium, the first European country to adopt national AP landmine ban legislation in 1995, some considered the comprehensive ban too radical a step.<sup>18</sup> Finland advocated for continued talks at the CD, and shared this position in 1996 with both France and the UK, until both governments changed in 1997.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Greece, Italy and Spain initially belonged to the ban-sceptic group of states, while Germany maintained an opaque dual-track position where it supported continuing the negotiations in both frameworks simultaneously.<sup>20</sup> By late 1997, however, as a result of the uniform position of the three consecutive pro-ban EU presidency countries and growing international pressure, the clear majority of the EU members had shifted to supporting a comprehensive ban. Ultimately Finland was left isolated in preventing a common EU position in favour of the Ottawa Treaty in the EU Council meeting in December 1997.<sup>21</sup>

10. Jukka Tarkka (NUOR), Parliament of Finland (1998)
11. Thakur, Ramesh; Maley, William (1999), 'The Ottawa Convention on Landmines: A Landmark Humanitarian Treaty in Arms Control?', *Global Governance*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (July–Sept. 1999), p. 284
12. Thakur, Ramesh; Maley, William (1999), p. 284
13. Thakur, Ramesh; Maley, William (1999), p. 284
14. Wexler, Lesley (2003), 'The International Deployment of Shame, Second-best Responses, and Norm Entrepreneurship: the Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Landmine Ban Treaty', *Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law*, Vol. 20, No. 3, p. 583
15. Wexler, Lesley (2003), p. 582
16. Wexler, Lesley (2003), p. 582
17. Thakur, Ramesh; Maley, William (1999), p. 284
18. Lond, David & Hindle, Laird (1998), p. 73
19. Lond, David & Hindle, Laird (1998), p. pp. 74, 76, 77
20. Long, David (2002), 'The European Union and the Ottawa Process to ban landmines', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 9, No. 3, p. 435; Lond, David & Hindle, Laird (1998), pp. 74, 76, 77
21. European Union (1997), 97/817/CFSP: Joint Action adopted by the Council on the basis of Article J.3 of the Treaty on European Union, on anti-personnel landmines (28 November), link accessed 10 July 2017, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31997E0817>

## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO BAN LANDMINES

The leading non-governmental organisation (NGO) advocating a comprehensive landmine ban treaty was the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), formed in 1992 by six NGOs: Handicap International, Mines Advisory Group, Human Rights Watch, Physicians for Human Rights, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation and Medico International. Today it consists of several hundred member organisations in some 100 countries. Since the creation of the Ottawa Treaty, ICBL has contributed significantly to the monitoring of the landmine ban through its annual *Landmine Monitor* publication, often cited as the 'de-facto monitoring regime' of the Mine Ban Treaty.

ICBL website, link accessed 10 July 2017, <http://www.icbl.org/en-gb/home.aspx>

Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor website, link accessed 10 July 2017, <http://the-monitor.org/en-gb/home.aspx>

# III. THE FINNISH DEBATE

## III.I AGAINST THE LANDMINE BAN

“On what is this new ‘conventional wisdom’ based that judges the inaccurate and vague Ottawa Treaty as the measuring stick for all international responsibility and morality?”<sup>22</sup>

The debate was framed by opponents of the Ottawa Treaty as a stark choice between Finland’s national security and international reputation. They deployed many powerful arguments supporting the idea that landmines were essential to credible defence, and that it would be irresponsible and reckless to ignore the AP landmines’ unique capabilities. For them, joining the Treaty due to abstract reputational concerns was fundamentally against the principle that government’s first duty is to the defence of the realm.

The first set of arguments deployed against the ban highlighted its general weakness, its threat to the established UN-led inter-governmental disarmament processes, and the Russian abstention. It was noted that the Treaty relied upon national reporting and lacked effective supra-national enforcement, monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms.<sup>23</sup> Both the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committees regretted that the Treaty was not universal in their statements when the legislative proposal was passed in the parliament in 2011.<sup>24</sup> For some MPs, this was an example of international double-standards as small nations were pressured to join whilst ‘the largest sinners’, such as China, India, Russia and the United States could remain outside it with impunity.<sup>25</sup> With over half of the world’s population outside the Treaty and the Treaty side-lining both the UN processes and most of the permanent UNSC members, some MPs simply did not believe that a truly universal treaty was possible – regardless of the Finnish position.<sup>26</sup>

It was the Russian position that featured most heavily in the debate on Ottawa Treaty’s universality. In fact, the Russian position, supporting the CD process and emphasising ‘responsible’ use of landmines, was similar to the initial Finnish position before 2004.<sup>27</sup> Russia had deployed AP landmines in large quantities in its military operations in Chechnya and Dagestan and its recent development of improved AP mine types strongly suggested a long-term commitment to their continued deployment.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, some MPs implied that Finland was considering unilateral disarmament in relation to Russia and should only join the Treaty when Russia would do the same.<sup>29</sup>

In the early discussions, many anti-ban MPs also advocated investing effort to revive the Geneva-based CD talks instead of the competing Ottawa process.<sup>30</sup> They reasoned that the eventual agreements would benefit from a stronger enforcement mechanism and higher likelihood of including countries like Russia.<sup>31</sup> Even as late as 2011, one MP from a government party at the time (National Coalition Party) maintained that the Ottawa Treaty side-lined the CD in a manner that was not in the Finland’s long-term interests.<sup>32</sup>

The second set of arguments against the ban-Treaty contrasted the responsible deployment of landmines by Finland with that in other countries. In other words, it was argued that the Ottawa Treaty was never meant to apply for Finland and that it certainly did not benefit from the Finnish participation.

**‘A mine, an antipersonnel mine, is a relatively humane weapon. It takes a leg, but spares a life, all other weapons are much worse. For example, with the assault rifle you aim to the organs, so that the wounded will suffer for as long as possible and thus require more assistance. Thus, a mine is not, in that way, an inhumane weapon like many others.’<sup>33</sup>**

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Throughout the debate it was argued that ‘established civilized states’ were not responsible for the civilian suffering that drove the Ottawa process.<sup>34</sup> Given that Finland’s mines were safely stored and guarded, and that they would only be deployed if Finland was under threat of imminent attack by a foreign force, ‘Finland has nothing to be ashamed of’ and, in fact, the Finnish mine policy was ‘very responsible’.<sup>35</sup> It was said that Finland was already supporting the humanitarian mine action in the conflict zones where this action was necessary and that Finland had shown during its wars in the 1940s that it was capable of mapping and removing its mines without causing harm to civilians.<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, the anti-ban faction maintained that war crimes and mine-related suffering in the world would be unaffected whether Finland signed the Treaty or not.<sup>37</sup> For them, the Finnish signature ‘would not increase world peace’.<sup>38</sup>

The third set of arguments centred around the unreasonable costs that would result from destroying stockpiles and replacing them with new weapon systems.

The estimated additional costs varied throughout the debate with the initial estimate in 1998 being an additional 80 million euros in *annual* state defence spending.<sup>39</sup> This amount was seen as unreasonably high, although it was later greatly reduced. As one MP put it, it would mean using ‘taxpayers’ money for humanitarian reasons in a manner that would not improve anyone’s humanitarian circumstances anywhere.<sup>40</sup>

The special mine committee’s report in 2004 claimed that Finland’s stockpile of landmines would need replacing in the 2020’s.<sup>41</sup> This information was used to support the anti-Ottawa position that signing the Treaty any earlier was, in fact, only a matter of expensive and irresponsible image politics.<sup>42</sup> Abolishing the landmines before their use-by date was an unnecessary financial burden and it was ‘absurd’ to replace perfectly usable material.<sup>43</sup> This would lead to reductions in garrison numbers and professional staff.<sup>44</sup> In a veiled supportive gesture to these arguments, the parliamentary budget committee also concluded replacement systems would be more expensive to maintain and their technical lifespan would be shorter.<sup>45</sup>

The final set of arguments emphasised the unique capabilities of AP landmines that, according to past experience and the defence establishment, could not be fully compensated by any alternative weapon system.

Opponents made regular references to previous wars and the ‘experiences of the veteran generation’ in the face of overwhelming Soviet forces.<sup>46</sup> Joining the Ottawa Treaty would dishonour the sacrifices of veterans.<sup>47</sup> There was a strong assumption that any future conflict would involve similar cherished conditions of reconnaissance and guerrilla operations.<sup>48</sup> They also frequently argued that the army had no effective alternatives to slow down or stop a mechanised invasion force.<sup>49</sup> According to the interim report of the special mine commission, without the anti-personnel landmines a mechanised enemy force could penetrate Finland’s territory at double or even triple the speed, and would increase the casualties amongst the defensive units and complicate reconnaissance and guerrilla operations behind the enemy lines.<sup>50</sup> AP mines were seen as instrumental in a defensive battle against any materially, numerically and technologically superior force.<sup>51</sup> The study concluded there were no valid military or economic arguments for abandoning landmines and the question was purely political.<sup>52</sup> From a military perspective, the proposal would mean replacing existing effective capabilities with new, unproven replacement technologies, at the cost of other already planned modernisation initiatives.<sup>53</sup> Even several interlinked systems would be unable to provide the landmines’

unique deterrent function.<sup>54</sup> Citing these findings, MPs opposing the ban claimed that the real expertise and authority on the subject matter resided with the Defence Forces and not in the Foreign Ministry or the national parliament.<sup>55</sup>

Finland's territorial defence forces were already facing budget cuts to their training and equipment.<sup>56</sup> Even Seppo Kääriäinen (KESK), Minister of Defence when the 2004 National Security and Defence Policy Review decided upon a phased landmine withdrawal, voiced his concerns for the negative impact to Finland's defence capabilities in the 2011 parliamentary debate when he was a backbench MP.<sup>57</sup> With the planned 800 million Euro cuts to the defence budget for the parliamentary term in 2011-2014, he was not alone.<sup>58</sup> Jussi Niinistö, vice-chairperson of the Finns Party and chair of the Parliamentary Defence Committee at the time, declared that the simultaneous effect of the budget cuts and the Ottawa Treaty effectively meant that Finland was giving up on territorial defence – the principle of defending the entirety of its physical territory.<sup>59</sup> This, together with the threat of greater Finnish losses in any such conflict, undermined the morale of the defending troops as well as the appeal of the Finnish conscription system.<sup>60</sup>

Taken together, these arguments presented a convincing case that the proposal to join the Ottawa Treaty would significantly damage Finland's national security, that this impact was more important and verifiable than any potential damage to Finland's foreign policy credibility or reputation, and that this would be *understood* by other states. To support the landmine ban was framed as both irresponsible and unpatriotic. One early exchange between National Coalition Party and Social Democratic Party MPs from 1998 illustrates the point:

**Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP):** 'I want to emphasise that, when discussing the mine ban, the question is not whether Finland needs landmines, but whether the world needs them. And as, at least for me, the answer is clear, that the world does not need them, we have to be actively engaged in the process that will eventually lead to a comprehensive landmine ban.'<sup>61</sup>

**Ben Zyskowicz (KOK):** 'When MP Kiljunen said that we should not set the question as whether Finland needs landmines, well this is exactly the way the question should be set. We must assess this question precisely in the light of our national interest.'<sup>62</sup>

**Hannu Kemppainen (KESK):** 'The primary question is, surely, the one MP Kiljunen asked, of which we should first take care of...Finland's security, or the world security. I believe that after we have looked after our own security, then we have a much better chance of looking after the security of others.'<sup>63</sup>

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The prospect of potential damage to the Finland's reputation was often brought up and eagerly attacked by opponents of the ban. Already in 1998, Ben Zyskowicz (KOK) noted that it was 'absolutely mistaken' to fear that approaching the question from the point of view of Finnish national interest and national security would risk Finland's international reputation.<sup>64</sup> Seppo Kanerva (KOK) even declared that giving up the landmines would be 'an extremely unpatriotic policy.'<sup>65</sup> Similarly in 2004, Seppo Lahtela (KESK) reminded his colleagues that as long as major military powers had not signed the Treaty, including the United States, Russia and China, no state could legitimately question the Finnish position.<sup>66</sup>

In the 2011 parliamentary debate, the Finns Party continued to relentlessly attack what they perceived as a prioritisation of Finnish international reputation over Finnish national security.<sup>67</sup> In the words of Mika Niikko (PS), 'everyone understands our country's national history and geographical location... [We] can only wonder if our defence policy is being led by some foreign organisations or some invisible reputation.'<sup>68</sup> Jussi Niinistö (PS) echoed these sentiments, claiming that discussion on the substance and security implications of the Ottawa Treaty was unduly overshadowed by a misguided concern for Finland's foreign policy consistency, credibility and international reputation. He said this overlooked the fact that



'other EU countries were either members of NATO, islands without land borders, like Ireland, or had a buffer state on their eastern side, like Sweden... [while] none of these applied to Finland.'<sup>69</sup> In the final debate before the vote in 2011, the Finns Party pleaded with other parties to recognise the damage suffered by Finnish national security with the 2004 decision and to reject a treaty they saw as 'unpatriotic, repulsive and anti-intellectual', and as 'a peak of stupidity'.<sup>70</sup>

AP landmines were considered by those arguing against the ban as essential to Finland's credible defence, and thus Finland's territorial integrity and independence.<sup>71</sup> And yet critical voices in most parties became gradually more subdued until in 2011 it was mainly the Finns Party opposing the Ottawa Treaty. In the later debate, as the position of the anti-ban faction weakened and signing the Ottawa Treaty became Finland's official foreign policy in 2004, the language and metaphors became more colourful:

**'This is not a matter for international idols competition. The Finnish landmine policy has not been decided before and should not be decided today in the disarmament symposiums of the socialist international or the tea parties of the anti-globalisation whimpers.'**<sup>72</sup>

**'Helping civilian victims in countries where landmines have caused suffering to civilians is of course understandable. Absolving conscience at the cost of Finland's defence cannot, however, be accepted.'**<sup>73</sup>

**'Signing the Ottawa Treaty is an act of unilateral disarmament that is mostly motivated by concerns for Finland's image... At war, the gap in capabilities between the antipersonnel landmines and the replacement systems will be measured in Finnish blood.'**<sup>74</sup>

Despite the strongly expressed views that Finland's national security would be deeply harmed by joining the Ottawa Treaty, these arguments did not prevail. Whilst it was acknowledged explicitly that defence capabilities would be adversely affected, the view that national security would on balance be strengthened by Finland's contribution to a stronger international community won the day. The government's legislative proposal that would align the Finnish national legislation to the requirements of the Ottawa Treaty and mandate the government to submit the Finnish signature to the UN Secretary General was passed on 25 November 2011 with 110 in favour, 47 against and 42 abstentions.

Finland signed the Ottawa Treaty and was going to destroy its landmines.

## III.II IN FAVOUR OF THE LANDMINE BAN

“I believe that our example has an impact.”<sup>75</sup>

Humanitarian and human security dimensions clearly had a role in motivating some of the pro-ban treaty arguments.<sup>76</sup> Kimmo Kiljunen MP (SDP) claimed in 1998 that the question that should be asked was not ‘whether Finland needs landmines’ but ‘whether the world needed them.’<sup>77</sup> Even in the case of Finland itself, there was no guarantee that landmine field maps would be accurate or survive the conflict, or that the mines would not be moved.<sup>78</sup> Thus, while Finland’s landmine doctrine had not led to civilian suffering, the high toll of civilian deaths and injuries caused by AP landmines elsewhere and the *potential* of it happening in Finland was seen as a justifiable reason for the international landmine ban treaty.<sup>79</sup>

Yet proponents realised that the national security implications must be addressed head-on if Finland was to join the Treaty.<sup>80</sup> Their first tactic was to delay Finland’s participation, first to 2006 and then 2012, to give sufficient time to develop or acquire the necessary compensating weapon systems without risking credible national defence.<sup>81</sup> The 2004 special study stated that the additional delay of six years from 2006 to 2012 would allow Finland to ‘resolve the landmine question in the most suitable manner’ while avoiding ‘notable negative political impact’.<sup>82</sup> The parliamentary defence and foreign affairs committees praised the delay for providing a long period of ‘deliberation and adaptation’, as both necessary and justified given the role of landmines in the Finnish territorial defence.<sup>83</sup>

Both the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence agreed that despite the fact that the capabilities delivered by landmines could not *fully* be compensated by other weapon systems, replacing them was possible without a significant negative impact upon the overall national defence credibility.<sup>84</sup> They disagreed, however, over:

- how much additional funding this would require (Defence Ministry requesting 311 million euros and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggesting 200 million euros);
- what level of performance was to be expected from the compensating systems;<sup>85</sup> and
- whether the six years’ delay was truly worth the damage to the Finland’s reputation and foreign policy credibility.<sup>86</sup>

The government’s proposal included 200 million euros of ‘fresh money’ and 100 million euros reallocated from within the existing MoD budget. As for the expected performance of new systems, this remained an open question to the very end, and the Defence Committee was forced to report in 2011 that it could not agree unanimously on the question.<sup>87</sup> The short exchange below illustrates this disagreement:

**Mika Kari (SPD):** ‘It is irresponsible to create an impression that relinquishing our anti-personnel landmines would leave a parade-door open for a potential attacker’s march into Finland.’

**Heckler (interrupting, PS):** ‘No it is not!’

**Reijo Tossavainen (PS):** ‘At least a side door!’

**Mika Kari (SDP, continues):** ‘On the contrary, the renewal of the defence equipment both replaces existing capability and creates entirely new, and new kind of, operational capabilities for the Defence Forces.’<sup>88</sup>

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A blue-tinted photograph of a mine in a field of grass. The mine is a circular, metallic object with a central protrusion and a small hole, partially buried in the ground. The grass is dense and covers the entire foreground and background.

## NEW CAPABILITIES AND DOCTRINES FOR FINLAND

According to the Finnish Defence Forces, the loss of landmines was compensated with several different and mutually reinforcing weapon systems. One of these was the Finnish-made manually activated directional anti-personnel mines, a mine type similar to the U.S M18 Claymore. Also the Finnish anti-tank mines were modernised given that they would lose their protection from AP mines normally deployed around them. The Defence Forces would also acquire several different types of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to be used for reconnaissance, aerial patrolling and target acquisition as well as improve the infantry units' night fighting capability and mobility.

AP mines had served a crucial role in the self-defense of infantry units from squad and platoon level upwards. Following the abolition of AP landmines and the acquisition of new hardware, also Finland's army doctrine had to be rethought. This meant adjusting the individual, squad and platoon level infantry training across the army's branches but especially so with regards to reconnaissance and guerrilla tactics. Finally, it is likely that the loss of AP landmines contributed to the adoption of the Army's 2015 Comprehensive Doctrine that introduced a new more flexible and mobile defence doctrine, moving from a line-defence to a point-defence.



The second counter-argument was that mines had lost much of their military utility in the 21st century. Jaakko Laakso (VAS) wondered in 1998 whether the most vocal proponents of landmines had 'at least one foot, more often both feet and most importantly the heart and the mind stuck in the old doctrine', that of a large-scale land invasion.<sup>89</sup> He thought the state leadership was unable to decide what the main threat to Finland's national security was, whether it was a large scale invasion attempt or a surgical strike, and thus discussing any policy or procurement options was premature.<sup>90</sup> The interim report of the special mine committee also emphasised the questionable utility of landmines in a situation of a 'political, economic or military pressure, or a strategic strike',<sup>91</sup> but also cautiously qualified the extent of their utility against a modern and highly mobile force.<sup>92</sup>

These arguments were supported by international studies on AP landmines' military utility. According to International Committee of the Red Cross, in a contemporary battlefield AP mines would at maximum cause minor 'delay and inconvenience' to the enemy, while accompanied by 'civilian carnage' in the long run.<sup>93</sup> One internal US army study even concluded that the air-dropped landmines 'were the biggest single cause of friendly-fire deaths during mock battles fought by the U.S. Army's digitized brigade.'<sup>94</sup> The International Committee of the Red Cross study similarly argued that in actual combat conditions, 'responsible' use of landmines was extremely difficult.<sup>95</sup> It also concluded that an overwhelming force might be ready to accept the level of casualties that would occur by simply passing through the minefield.<sup>96</sup>

These reservations were eagerly leveraged by the pro-Ottawa MPs in the 2011 debate with references to out-dated World War II, or rather Winter War, mentalities and the entirely different requirements for modern 'CNN warfare', such as the importance of controlling urban areas and air space.<sup>97</sup> In the words of Anni Sinnemäki (VIHR), it appeared as if in the Finnish Parliament there was a kind of 'a nostalgia party', in which the MPs would affectionately reminisce on their time in the armed forces... and the two previous wars thinking that the military conflicts that could take place today would be similar to those.<sup>98</sup>

Besides engaging in a debate on landmines' military utility, the main pro-ban argument centred around the credibility of Finland's foreign policy, the damage to international reputation, and crucially the idea that participating in the Ottawa Treaty would strengthen the global multilateral security arrangements and thus also the Finnish national security.

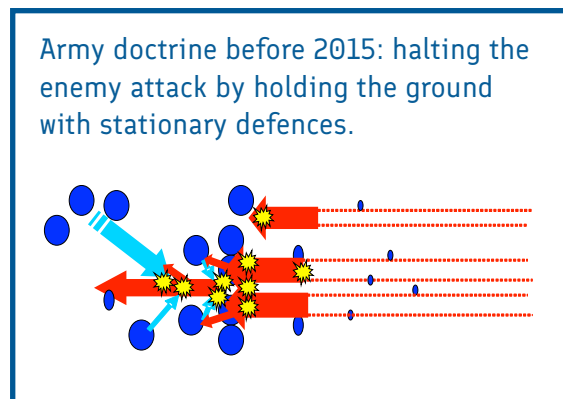
Finland's foreign policy credibility was often brought up. Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP) claimed that opposition to the Ottawa Treaty could call into question the credibility of the Finnish disarmament policy as a whole.<sup>99</sup> The interim report of the special mine committee also noted that remaining outside the Ottawa Treaty could be perceived as being inconsistent, and negatively impact Finland's overall standing 'as a supporter of multilateral disarmament' and specifically the credibility of Finnish position with regards to the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) processes.<sup>100</sup> This argument was strengthened by the decision in 2004 to join the Treaty in 2012. Any subsequent reversal would be deeply damaging to Finland's reputation and credibility.<sup>101</sup>

Many MPs, as well as President Tarja Halonen (SDP), observed that Finland had effectively abandoned its active role in international disarmament and distinguished itself from its usual peer-group of similarly activist states.<sup>102</sup> In 2011, Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja (SDP) stated that signing the Treaty would 'strengthen the image of Finland as a consistent and trustworthy member of the international community,' to which Anni Sinnemäki (VIHR) added that it would also give Finland 'authority and credibility' in other disarmament negotiations.<sup>103</sup> Jukka Kärnä (SDP) expressed his relief that Finland would no longer be in the same box as Myanmar, United Arab Emirates, China and Iraq, amongst other non-participating countries, but with Sweden and Norway instead.<sup>104</sup> For Anni Sinnemäki (VIHR) it was 'a choice regarding the kind of country group Finland wanted to belong.'<sup>105</sup> Satu Haapanen (VIHR) said that participating in the Treaty was not only a logical extension of Finnish conflict resolution, mediation and peace-building work globally but also an important and much-awaited signal internationally.<sup>106</sup>

The final and most remarkable element in the pro-ban faction's argumentation was the idea that this decision would reinforce the multilateral approach to international security and thus also indirectly but very crucially strengthen Finnish national security. One of the early statements from 1998 illustrates this:

**Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP):**

*'When international security is pursued through disarmament negotiations, the very process itself is reinforcing international security. International disarmament process cannot move forward, if, on a purely national basis, we decline to participate in it.'*<sup>107</sup>



Helsingin Sanomat (2016), 'Tällaisia ovat minilennokit, jotka korvaavat kielletyt jalkaväkimiinat – infrapunakamera tunnistaa panssarivaunun ilmasta', (8 September), link accessed 10 July 2017, <http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000002919987.html>

Maavoimien Esikunta (2012), 'Maavoiminen Kehittäminen Info', (26 April), link accessed 10 July 2017, [https://maanpuolustus.net/uploads/Maavoimien\\_kehittaminen.pdf](https://maanpuolustus.net/uploads/Maavoimien_kehittaminen.pdf)

In other words, the Finnish MPs acknowledged that an approach which blindly prioritises unilateral national security over multilateral steps to strengthen collective security is self-defeating. It is thus not prejudicial to national security to sacrifice short term defence capabilities or even well-established defence doctrines in the interests of more robust collective security cooperation and a strengthened rules-based international system.

Many MPs voiced this conviction in the 2011 debate. Anni Sinnemäki (VHIR) claimed that Finnish participation would strengthen the Treaty as a whole.<sup>108</sup> Minister Tuomioja (SDP) argued that this was not so much a question of Finnish reputation, but of 'the very efficacy and universality of the international treaty system' which was a clear and vital Finnish interest.<sup>109</sup> Mika Kari (SDP) elaborated this idea further by arguing that 'a modern state does not demonstrate its sovereignty by piling bombs and explosives on its borders' but by being 'actively engaged in shaping the global environment.'<sup>110</sup> For him, 'Finland's best option' to guarantee the security of its citizens was a good foreign policy, based on partnership with neighbouring countries, and that this 'basic pillar of security was not replaceable by any weapon system.'<sup>111</sup> According to Jukka Kärnä (SDP), 'everyone in the chamber should recognise that the best type of defence policy was always the promotion of international peace' and that ultimately the Ottawa Treaty was all about committing to 'common rules of the game'.<sup>112</sup>



22. Jukka Tarkka (NUOR), Parliament of Finland (1998)
23. Jukka Tarkka (NUOR), Parliament of Finland (1998); Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 9
24. Jussi Niinistö (PS), Timo Soini (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
25. Timo Soini (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
26. Tom Packalen (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
27. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 10
28. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 18
29. Tony Halme (PS), Parliament of Finland (2004); Pentti Oinonen (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
30. Markus Aaltonen (SDP), Jukka Tarkka (NUOR), Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP), Parliament of Finland (1998)
31. Markus Aaltonen (SDP), Jukka Tarkka (NUOR), Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP), Parliament of Finland (1998)
32. Ilkka Kanerva (KOK), Parliament of Finland (2011)
33. Raimo Tiliäinen (RKP), Parliament of Finland (1998)
34. Jukka Tarkka (NUOR), Parliament of Finland (1998)
35. Markku Pohjola (SDP), Parliament of Finland (1998); Jukka Tarkka (NUOR), Parliament of Finland (1998); and Ben Zyskowicz (KOK), Parliament of Finland (1998)
36. Tony Halme (PS), Parliament of Finland (2004); Katri Komi (KESK), Parliament of Finland (2011); and Kimmo Kivelä (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
37. Mika Niikko (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
38. Mika Niikko (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
39. Jukka Tarkka (NUOR), Parliament of Finland (1998)
40. Jukka Tarkka (NUOR), Parliament of Finland (1998); and Markku Pohjola (SDP), Parliament of Finland (1998)
41. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 21
42. Tony Halme (PS), Parliament of Finland (2004)
43. Tony Halme (PS), Parliament of Finland (2004); Bjarne Kallis (KD), Parliament of Finland (2004)
44. Seppo Lahtela (KESK), Parliament of Finland (2004)
45. Prime Minister's Office (2004)
46. Sulo Aittoniemi (KESK), Parliament of Finland (1998)
47. Lea Mäkipää (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
48. Sulo Aittoniemi (KESK), Parliament of Finland (1998); Seppo Lahtela (KESK), Parliament of Finland (2004)
49. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 3
50. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 22 and 23
51. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 18
52. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 4
53. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 4
54. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 4; and Prime Minister's Office (2004)
55. Seppo Lahtela (KESK), Parliament of Finland (2004)
56. Seppo Kääriäinen (KESK), Parliament of Finland (2011)
57. Seppo Kääriäinen (KESK), Parliament of Finland (2011)
58. Tom Packalen (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
59. Ismo Soukola (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
60. Ismo Soukola (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011); and Vesa-Matti Saarakkala (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
61. Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP), Parliament of Finland (1998)
62. Ben Zyskowicz (KOK), Parliament of Finland (1998)
63. Hannu Kempainen (KESK), Parliament of Finland (1998)
64. Ben Zyskowicz (KOK), Parliament of Finland (1998)
65. Seppo Kanerva (KOK), Parliament of Finland (1998)
66. Seppo Lahtela (KESK), Parliament of Finland (2004)
67. Ismo Soukola (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
68. Mika Niikko (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
69. Jussi Niinistö (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
70. Jussi Niinistö (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011); and Pentti Oinonen (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
71. Eero Lehti (KOK), Parliament of Finland (2011)
72. Jan Vapaavuori (KOK, 2004), 'Suomen ryhdikästä miinapolitiikkaa turha muuttaa', (7 August), link accessed 10 July 2017, <http://vapaavuori.net/dev/suomen-ryhdikasta-miinapolitiikka-turha-muuttaa/>
73. Hanna Mäntylä (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
74. Jussi Niinistö (PS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
75. Satu Haapanen (VIHR), Parliament of Finland (2011)
76. Foreign Affairs Committee, Parliament of Finland (2011)
77. Kimmo Kiljunen (SD), Parliament of Finland (1998)
78. Kimmo Kiljunen (SD), Parliament of Finland (1998)
79. Foreign Affairs Committee, Parliament of Finland (2011); and Defence Committee, Parliament of Finland (2011)
80. Markus Aaltonen (SD), Parliament of Finland (1998)
81. Erkki Tuomioja (SD), Parliament of Finland (2011)
82. Ministry of Defence (2004), p. 6
83. Foreign Affairs Committee, Parliament of Finland (2011); and Defence Committee, Parliament of Finland (2011)
84. Ministry of Defence (2004), p. 4
85. Ministry of Defence (2004), p. 9
86. Ministry of Defence (2004), p. 9
87. Defence Committee, Parliament of Finland (2011)
88. Mika Kari (SDP), Parliament of Finland (2011)
89. Jaakko Laakso (VAS), Parliament of Finland (1998)
90. Jaakko Laakso (VAS), Parliament of Finland (1998)
91. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 21
92. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 18
93. Thakur, Ramesh; Maley, William (1999), p. 279; International Committee of the Red Cross (1996), *Anti-personnel Landmines: Friend or Foe? A Study of the Military Use and Effectiveness of Anti-personnel Mines*, (Geneva)
94. Thakur, Ramesh; Maley, William (1999), p. 289
95. Thakur, Ramesh; Maley, William (1999), p. 289
96. Thakur, Ramesh; Maley, William (1999), p. 290
97. Mika Kari (SDP), Parliament of Finland (2011); and Jari Myllykoski (VAS), Parliament of Finland (2011)
98. Anni Sinnemäki (VIHR), Parliament of Finland (2011)
99. Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP), Parliament of Finland (1998)
100. Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 15
101. Foreign Affairs Committee, Parliament of Finland (2011); Defence Committee, Parliament of Finland (2011); and Jukka Kärnä (SDP), Parliament of Finland (2011)
102. Kaleva (2004), 'Halonon vaatii luopumista jalkaväkimiinoista', (27 February), link accessed 10 July 2017, <http://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/halonon-vaatii-luopumista-jalkavakimiinoista/361721/>; and Ministry of Defence (2003), p. 3
103. Erkki Tuomioja (SDP), Parliament of Finland (2011); and Anni Sinnemäki (VIHR), Parliament of Finland (2011)
104. Jukka Kärnä (SDP), Parliament of Finland (2011)
105. Anni Sinnemäki (VIHR), Parliament of Finland (2011)
106. Satu Haapanen (VIHR), Parliament of Finland (2011)
107. Kimmo Kiljunen (SDP), Parliament of Finland (1998)
108. Anni Sinnemäki (VIHR), Parliament of Finland (2011)
109. Erkki Tuomioja (SDP), Parliament of Finland (2011)
110. Mika Kari (SDP), Parliament of Finland (2011)
111. Mika Kari (SDP), Parliament of Finland (2011)
112. Jukka Kärnä (SDP), Parliament of Finland (2011)

# IV. CONCLUSION

The Ottawa Treaty process has been strikingly successful. Despite the failed talks in Geneva and less than a year of negotiations under its belt, 122 states signed the Treaty in December 1997.<sup>113</sup>

Talking of a 'moral high ground' is common language for any humanitarian campaign, but in the case of AP landmines the effective 'norm entrepreneurship' has also shaped state policies.<sup>114</sup>

For a small militarily non-aligned state in Northern Europe, one could argue that upholding reputation and acceptance by the international community is especially important. The fact that other Nordic countries were particularly active in promoting the landmine ban and that its most vocal advocates were generally 'the smaller, more progressive and often neutral European states' only emphasised the misalignment between Finland's opposition to the Ottawa Treaty and its conventional position in the international state system.<sup>115</sup> From this perspective, Finland could be identified as an ideal target for so-called 'shaming' strategies.<sup>116</sup>

Another factor shaping the Finnish debate was the 'humanization' of an issue previously seen exclusively through the lens of national security.<sup>117</sup> This framing opened the landmine debate to a much wider body of stakeholders enabling a wider array of perspectives and positive-sum solutions to emerge.<sup>118</sup> For Finland, a traditional champion of human security and responsible statehood, it further strengthened the case for signing the Treaty.

While these two aspects are present also in the global landmine debate, the Finnish debate had also two unique characteristics.

In most national debates, the military utility of landmines was not an important or much debated question. In these countries' defence doctrines, AP mines did not play a major role and the issue of their military utility had more theoretical than practical implications. In Finland's case, the situation could have not been more different. As clearly shown in the anti-ban arguments, the Finnish defence doctrine and especially the territorial defence forces relied heavily upon AP landmine capabilities to the point that they could not be fully compensated for

by any other weapon system. It is precisely the uniquely important role of landmines for Finland's national security that makes the Finnish debate and its eventual outcome unique and remarkable.

Finland's participation in the Ottawa Treaty would not have been possible if the proponents of the ban had not engaged in the debate involving national security considerations. Humanitarian dimensions and responsibility would not have been sufficient. The way they did is the second special characteristic of the Finnish debate.

National security concerns determined the outcome in this debate. Those opposed to joining the Treaty highlighted the military utility of landmines and their essential contribution to strategic defence. Those arguing in favour argued that moving away from a dependence upon AP landmines would improve Finland's national security by locking it more clearly within the international community. Unilateral pursuit of military capabilities without regard to the international situation would only fuel regional and international insecurity.<sup>119</sup> In the end, when MPs were presented with a policy option that would both ensure Finnish international reputation as a responsible and humanitarian power and improve Finnish national security through a collective security mechanism, the legislative vote was clear and overwhelming.

Other countries take note!

113. Interestingly, this is exactly the same number of states as that that supported the vote to establish an international ban of nuclear weapons in July 2017.

114. International Campaign to Ban Landmines, link accessed 10 July 2017, <http://www.icbl.org/en-gb/home.aspx>; Long, David (2002), p. 280; Wexler, Lesley (2003), p. 586

115. Lond, David & Hindle, Laird (1998), p. 69; and Long, David (2002), p. 431

116. Wexler, Lesley (2003), p. 567

117. Wexler, Lesley (2003), p. 569

118. Thakur, Ramesh; Maley, William (1999), p. 281; and Cameron, Maxwell A. (1999), p. 87

119. Cameron, Maxwell A. (1999), p. 87

# V. EPILOGUE

“The decision has held, even though the government responsibility has changed and economic situation fluctuated. In a nationally difficult matter, we have also been able to carry out long-term planning and action.”<sup>120</sup>

After the Finnish Parliament passed the required legislation in 2011, the domestic landmine debate largely died down outside specialised military publications and the blogosphere. However, Finland continues to receive criticism from the international anti-landmine community as it retains a large number of AP landmines reserved for ‘training and research purposes’.<sup>121</sup> Possessing 16,500 AP mines in 2015, Finland has the largest stockpile of all parties to the Ottawa convention, followed by Turkey and Bangladesh.<sup>122</sup>

A second point of criticism concerns the lack of transparency. The ICBL has periodically noted that for many state parties retaining landmines, ‘the number of mines retained remains the same each year, indicating none are being consumed (destroyed) during training or research activities.’<sup>123</sup> Together with Burundi, Cape Verde, Cyprus, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo, Finland is one of the nine countries who have ‘never reported consuming any mines retained for permitted purposes since the treaty entered into force for them.’<sup>124</sup> Lastly, Finland has been criticised for misleadingly reporting that it has agreed to destroy its ‘entire stock of landmines’ and yet retaining thousands of them for abovementioned purposes.<sup>125</sup>

The landmine question resurfaced in connection to the war in Ukraine in 2014-2015 with the Finns Party and elements of the National Coalition Party and the Centre Party demanding withdrawal from the Ottawa Treaty due to the worsened security environment. In response, the then Defence Minister Mr Carl Haglund admitted that Finland retains the technical capabilities to restart AP landmine production if the political decision were made.<sup>126</sup> As of today, however, the opponents of the ban have not succeeded in mounting enough pressure to have the question debated in the parliament.

Finally, according to information released by the Defence Ministry in January 2017, the armed forces have been carrying out live tests with a new, globally unique mine-based AP weapon system that would possess the deterrent effect and other capabilities of conventional AP landmines but that would not violate the Ottawa Treaty.<sup>127</sup> It is well known that while the Ottawa Treaty bans passive AP mines, mine types that require manual activation are not prohibited and it is speculated that this new weapon could rely on drones for real-time surveillance and remote detonators to trigger. According to Defence Ministry officials, the new mine type has performed well in trials and that there are currently several European governments who have expressed interest should Finland decide to start exporting it.<sup>128</sup>

120. Erkki Tuomioja (SDP), Parliament of Finland (2011)

121. Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, Country report for Finland, (last updated in October 2015), link accessed 10 July 2017, <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2017/finland/view-all.aspx#fn16>

122. Landmine Monitor (2016), Monitoring and Research Committee, ICBL-CMC Governance Board, link accessed 10 July 2017, <http://www.the-monitor.org/media/2386748/Landmine-Monitor-2016-web.pdf>

123. Landmine Monitor (2016), p. 24

124. Landmine Monitor (2016), p. 24

125. Finnish National Broadcasting Company YLE (2012), ‘Finland destroying landmine stocks’, (21 August), link accessed 10 July 2017, [http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/finland\\_destroying\\_landmine\\_stocks/6264853](http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/finland_destroying_landmine_stocks/6264853)

126. Iltasanomat (2014), ‘Haglund Suomen miinoista: “Jalkaväkimiinat ovat yhä varastoissamme”’, (15.3.2014), link accessed 10 July 2017, <http://www.is.fi/kotimaa/art-2000000728493.html>

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128. Turun Sanomat (2017)

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