Finland to Phase out Anti-Personnel Landmines

Finland is trying to phase out the use of land mines. A Defence Ministry Report predicts that finding alternatives to domestic security will cost less than 600 million euros - a downgrade of earlier cost projections.

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Finland wants to be able to sign the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty in 2006, and get rid of all devices by 2010. The report says that anti-personnel landmines could potentially be replaced by another strategy. However, it has yet to produce a real solution on how this could be done.

Finland, Estonia, and the United States are the only western countries who have not ratified the treaty on - 141 countries have already accepted it.

But landmine use in Finland is not cut-and-dry, and the government is trying to find an acceptable path through the explosive issue.

Finland's Use of Landmines

While mines are not currently used, the right to deploy them has been a key element of defence strategy for many decades.

Finland's long border with Russia, which winds through forests and tundra, has been viewed as nearly indefensible without them. And in the past, the military has argued that their system of mine deployment is nothing like the massive and arbitrary spread of minefields in Cambodia and Somalia.

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