

for countries that govern justly, invest in their people and encourage economic freedom.

We are concerned, however, that the limitations on your Subcommittee's appropriations allocation caused a reduction in MCA levels to \$1.25 billion, half of the President's \$2.5 billion request. This level of funding may compromise the Corporation's opportunity to commit to full multi-year support to all countries that qualified to compete for MCA assistance this year and could have an impact on the support for countries that may qualify in 2005. For this reason, we would strongly oppose any amendments which would impose additional reductions, and will work with you to achieve the necessary resources for this Presidential foreign assistance initiative. Such amendments could call into question our commitment to support those countries that have taken responsibility for their own development through adoption of sound policies.

We look forward to working with you to assure MCA is adequately funded as we proceed with our critical mission in the developing world.

Sincerely,

COLIN L. POWELL,  
*Chairman of the Board.*

JOHN SNOW,  
*Vice Chairman of the Board.*

ROBERT ZOELLICK,  
*U.S. Trade Representative.*

PAUL V. APPLLEGARTH,  
*CEO, Millennium Challenge Corporation.*

ANDREW S. NATSIOS,  
*Administrator, U.S. Agency of International Development.*

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

The question was taken; and the Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) will be postponed.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I take this time to enter into a colloquy with the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KOLBE. I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Arizona, the subcommittee chairman, for entering into this colloquy.

Mr. Chairman, I am seeking at least \$3 million from the State Department's Nonproliferation Anti-terrorism Demining and Related Programs Account to fund demining activities in Laos.

A persistent and deadly legacy of our country's involvement in the Vietnam War continues to kill and maim thou-

sands of children, women, and men in the impoverished nation of Laos. I am speaking of the millions of unexploded cluster bombs left by a decade of bombing by the United States during the Vietnam War. This is a human rights tragedy for the people of Laos.

From 1964 to 1973, the U.S. flew 580,000 bombing runs over Laos, one every 9 minutes for 10 years. More than 2 million tons of ordnance were dropped on Laos, double the amount dropped on the European theater during the entirety of World War II. As many as 30 percent of these bombs dropped on Laos did not explode, leaving up to 20 million unexploded submunitions, known as bombies, litter throughout the country. These American bombies may be 30 years old, but they continue to kill and maim children as well as farmers clearing the land for farming.

In the first 5 months of 2004, 39 people died and 74 have been maimed by unexploded ordnance. In the 30 years since the end of the Vietnam War, an estimated 10,000 Laotian people, including thousands of children, have died. And yet while families struggle for food and survival, tens of thousands of acres of land cannot be put into agricultural production because the Earth is contaminated with this deadly cluster ordnance.

In today's dollars, our Nation spent \$9 million every day for 10 years dropping millions of tons of bombs on Laos. This year, fiscal year 2004, the State Department will spend only \$1.4 million helping to remove our Nation's deadly legacy.

We have a responsibility to help to end this ongoing human rights tragedy. I had intended to offer an amendment to more than double the level of the current funding in this account for Laos. However, I understand the chairman of the subcommittee has agreed he will seek to include language in conference with the other body that sufficient funds be found in the Nonproliferation Anti-terrorism Demining and Related Programs Account or from the Bilateral Assistance programs for Laos in order to continue this important work in fiscal year 2005; and, if possible, at \$3 million in order to help provide for the expeditious removal of the unexploded munitions from Laos.

Mr. Chairman, does the gentleman agree he will help to include such language in conference with the Senate?

Mr. KOLBE. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman, the gentlewoman is correct in her characterization. Assuming the availability of funds, we will seek to include report language that, at a minimum, would continue the program in Laos at the fiscal year 2004 level; but, if possible, at a higher level of \$3 million.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I sincerely thank him for his courtesy and also for pursuing this. I also want to thank the ranking member, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs.

LOWEY), for her support on this matter. I look forward to working with both of them to address this important issue.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the intent of the gentlewoman's amendment, and I appreciate her thoughtful comments.

The problem of unexploded ordnance in Laos is real and will be addressed immediately. I would strongly urge a significant portion of the funds already in the bill for demining be used to address this problem in Laos, and I want to thank the gentlewoman for bringing this important issue to the attention of the committee.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GARRETT OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

LIMITATION ON ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

SEC. \_\_\_\_ None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to send or otherwise pay for the attendance of more than 50 Federal employees at any single conference occurring outside the United States.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT).

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, while those on both sides of the aisle may disagree exactly how we got here today, I think most of us, myself included, would say that, as far as the Federal budget is concerned, we are spending too much and the deficit is too high. That is why I am offering an amendment that is, I think, a commonsense approach to help limit spending and the abuse that our constituents at home complain about.

I will say this: when I go home to my town hall meetings, so many times constituents ask me, why in the world is Congress spending so much money on this or that particular program. In short, my amendment will limit the number of Federal employees that are able to be sent to international conferences to 50.

Recently, there has been a trend in our government to send far in excess of the amount of staff to these international conferences, costing our taxpayers millions and millions of extra dollars. This amendment would simply put a cap on that number.

Now, like my colleagues on the other side of the aisle on this, I understand