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I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in permitting me to speak. I appreciate Mr. Edwards' leadership, that of Chairman Walsh, and my good friend, Sam Farr, for taking the attention to the problem of the toxic and explosive legacy of 225 years of military operations in the United States. We are not talking about problems overseas, we are talking about communities in every single State in the Union.

Mr. Farr's experience with Fort Ord over, I don't know, over 15 years now, has demonstrated the scope and scale of the problem, if we do it right, there are tremendous opportunities. Many of these bases are jewels that can be returned to productive use.

His experience has also shown how complicated they can be; that if we don't have the right plan, we don't invest the resources, it can drag on and on and on. Sadly, we have over 3,000 sites around the country that still are a part of this toxic legacy.

I do appreciate what the subcommittee has done. You have a difficult job. I wouldn't want to have to balance those equities. But I am here today arguing for more attention and more resources to deal with accelerating the problem in the past and the promises of the past.

I am going to offer an amendment in a few minutes that would transfer from the 2005 BRAC account money that will be used to deal with the first four rounds and those communities that are waiting.

Now, there are going to be some who will say, well, you are offsetting a much bigger number than the mere \$77 million. And that is because the 5.3 billion, an increase of \$3.6 billion that is technically set aside for 2005 is not going to be spent. The payout rate is something like 5 percent for this next year. You are not going to use it. It is a phony number. You can safely transfer resources to help people who have already suffered closure and who have not been dealt with fairly by this Congress. You can look at Mather Air Force Base in California, closed in the first round, and their cleanup isn't slated to be completed until 2072. That is unconscionable.

I would respectfully request that Congress no longer be missing in action when it comes to cleaning up the bombs, the munitions, the fuel depot, the multiple problems that have been left by communities, for communities to deal with, and impede the recycling. On base closures under BRAC, the unexploded bombs and chemical contamination prevents 140,000 acres on closed and realigned bases from being transferred right now to local communities for redevelopment.

The last point I would make is that it goes far beyond this subcommittee. Again, I appreciate their attention and the work they have done, but we have to have the appropriations committee and the authorizing committees to get serious about this. We have an up and down cycle where we put some money in and then the money goes away. We transfer it in areas when all of a sudden there is a huge problem that gets the attention, like Spring Valley in Washington, DC. on the campus of the American University. That is where we tested and developed chemical weapons during World War I.

We have had three cleanups to try and solve that problem. The more that we focus on this, the more that we invest on an ongoing basis, the more that we develop the techniques, the technology, it is not just going to save people around the country from this problem, but that same technology that will help us figure out whether it is a hub cap or a 105 millimeter shell will be able to be used to protect our soldiers in Iraq. That is how I lost my first constituent, was a land mine.

Now, I would suggest that, if we get serious about this, we will not only accelerate the technology and the research that will make our communities safer and healthier here at home, but it will protect lives of our service people overseas and will also deal with the vast amounts of munitions and land mines that are scattered all around the world that kill innocent victims every day.