Notes from United Nations Mine Action Service

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*Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)*

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The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) serves as the focal point for U.N.-related activities carried out by 11 departments and agencies within the organization. This coordinated and proactive approach maximizes the potential for duplication of effort, and ensures clear delineation of responsibility and integration of work by all in solving the problems. For the needs and objectives of U.N. mine action, UNMAS is responsible for the coordination of:

- Mine action policy development and coordination;
- Surveillance and monitoring of the global landmine threat;
- Mine action program initiation and implementation;
- Information management;
- Quality management and technology issues;
- Advocacy and consciousness-raising; and
- Resource mobilization.

Policy Development and Coordination
As focal point, UNMAS develops policy to guide the cooperative efforts of all those involved in U.N. mine action in supporting long-term preventive operations. Mine Action and Effective Coordination: The United Nations Policy was developed in consultation with other partners in 1998 to clarify the key principles on which mine action is based, and to identify cooperative arrangements within the United Nations for all mine action activities. UNMAS has continued to develop further guidelines to augment this policy, including a 1999 paper on cooperation with NGOs, and similar key positions in the area of mine action. UNMAS has also chairs an inter-agency consultative and priority-setting mechanism within the United Nations, and an additional forum involving key NGO and international organizations.

Landmine Threat Assessment and Monitoring
UNMAS continuously assesses and monitors the global landmine threat in order to identify needs and develop appropriate responses. Inter-agency and multi-agency assessment teams are deployed to affected regions to define the scope and nature of the landmine/UXO problem, identify constraining factors and opportunities affecting the mine action response, and formulate recommendations for mine action activities. Thus far, 15 such missions have been deployed. Depending on the situation, Level 1 Impact Surveys are often deployed as a follow-up to such assessment missions, with the information gathered being used to determine priorities and identify areas with the greatest needs. Impact Surveys identify the general location of known and suspected mined areas, and focus on the evaluation of the humanitarian and socioeconomic impact of landmine contamination.

Program Initiation and Support
In keeping with the U.N. mine action policy, responsibility for supporting long-term integrated mine-action programs rests with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), where UNMAS remains involved in an advisory and monitoring capacity. In the context of humanitarian emergencies and peacekeeping operations, the involvement of UNMAS is more critical and direct. It is responsible for the placement, enabling, and coordination of deploying mine action operations, as well as their support. The United Nations Presence and Mission, and UNMAS, working in close cooperation, are the principal actors within the United Nations for all mine action activities.

Information Management
Given the scope of the landmine problem, the wide-spectrum of factors to take into consideration and the number of actors involved, the development of an appropriate information management system has been identified as a priority to support proper monitoring, planning and evaluation, and implementation. As a result, UNMAS has asked the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to develop the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA). Thus far a "field module" version of the field module—continues.

Additional initiatives are also being continued with regard to information management issues, including development of improved electronic mediums for dealing with issues as diverse as donor funding and stockpile destruction, as well as cooperation with other initiatives in areas such as conformity of mine action information databases.

Quality Management and Technology
UNMAS is responsible for the development, maintenance and promotion of technical and safety standards for mine action. As a part of this role, with the support of the GICHD, the International Standards for Mine Clearance Operations have been revised, updated and expanded to become the International Mine Action Standards. Guidelines for mine awareness education have also been formulated by UNICEF, while the public health aspect of victim assistance sees the World Health Organization (WHO) in the lead within the U.N. system to discuss requirements for additional standards with other actors such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). With regard to technology, UNMAS has been called upon to take a role in the development and effective integration of mine action and victim assistance activities with other mine-related activities.

Advocacy and Consciousness-raising
Advocacy, public information and consciousness-raising activities are integral parts of the international effort to rid the world of landmines, and UNMAS is involved in stimulating the use of mines and supporting a global ban on these weapons. With over 100 States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, the emphasis is also shifting from advocacy to supporting treaty implementation, as more countries face the need to implement the obligations of ratification. UNMAS also cooperates with other organizations.
NGOs

In the interest of expanding the understanding of other organizations regarding Landmine Impact Survey, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation's (VVAF) Survey Action Center (SAC) invited HDTC to send two instructors to the first-ever Survey Training Symposium in August 1999. The intent of this invitation was to ensure that Special Operations Forces trained at HDTC leave with a clear understanding of the Landmine Impact Survey process they are likely to encounter in the field. These same teams visit most countries undergoing survey. New Zealand exchanged Warrant Officer Fred Estall, an Engineer officer, and HDTC civilian instructor David Cornelli, a retired U.S. Army EOD technician, attended the course and provided valuable input.

HDTC reciprocated for the invitation to the Survey Training Symposium by inviting SAC to send staff members to the two-week HDTC course. The author was able to attend in July and August 2000. While there, he provided a four-hour block of instruction regarding Landmine Impact Survey and mine action in Thailand and Yemen, as he had participated in SAC missions to those countries and was able to share extensive national mine action background with the students. The Special Forces team attending the course was preparing for their deployment to work with TMAC in Thailand, and the two U.S. Navy EOD technicians were preparing for a mission to Yemen. Incidentally, these two divers would be among the initial team to inspect the USS Cole following the terrorist attack in October 2000. The benefits of this joint NGO/military training would become apparent several months later in Thailand.

While visiting the SAC and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) Survey in Thailand in December 2000, Richard Kidd was able to interact with the detachment technician who attended the same HDTC course as the author. The "Team Tech" demonstrated clear familiarity with Landmine Impact Survey procedures. This understanding is facilitating the work of the NGOs involved in the Thai Survey, TMAC and the U.S. government in Thailand.

The potential for other U.S. military humanitarian demining teams to positively influence national and international authorities and humanitarian implementers regarding Landmine Impact Surveys indicates that a SAC presence during HDTC

If I have witnessed the mine clearance handiwork of a number of foreign military personnel trained by U.S. forces that were, in turn, trained at HDTC, and based upon these experiences, I can attest to the exceptional quality, rigor and discipline of the HDTC program of instruction." — Pat F. Paterno

CTSC & HDTC

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evidence collection and grave exhumations near mined areas. Safely neutralizing landmines around mass graves, without destroying evidence, is an important consideration for national and international law enforcement agencies involved in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

SA Baker, a certified bomb technician and FBI Los Angeles' Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Coordinator, says that he will now develop a mine awareness and safety course for FBI employees based upon the instruction he received at HDTC.

prepare selected members of conventional units to advise commanders regarding unit mine awareness training.

Similarly, through a participatory process in the "schoolhouse," mine action NGOs will develop a clear understanding of U.S. military capabilities and objectives in their shared arena. HDTC Director Steve Groyz, and other DoD and DoS officials have expressed interest and support for this concept, and discussions are under way between HDTC and SAC as to how this might be accomplished. Two of the major international demining NGOs have stated that the idea is one they would support.

The Future: Expanding Civil-

Military Cooperation in Mine Action Training

HDTC is planning several initiatives for the near future. A four-day humanitarian demining orientation course for international officers is under development. In addition, a train-the-trainer course is planned that will prepare selected members of conventional units to advise commanders regarding unit mine awareness training. A new multi-million dollar CTSC/HDTC training facility was completed in October 2000. The facility includes state-of-the-art classrooms, a booby-trap house representing varying environments and devices, and mine lanes and ranges. Instruction will begin in February 2001 in the new facility, will

of the driving forces behind the creation of CTSC/HDTC.

He emphasizes the continuing DoD commitment to the humanitarian mine action community: "Humanitarian demining is clearly an evolving mission area. It is a vital piece of the Army's contribution to the National Security Strategy. The Counter-mine Training Support Center and Humanitarian Demining Training Center are tremendous venues for training our soldiers with the skills and knowledge that they will need to safely and successfully deploy into an increasingly complex international environment. In order to succeed in the humanitarian demining arena, it is critical that the Army work in close concert with other [DoD] agencies and [NGOs] in order to share experiences and exchange information."

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involved in advocacy efforts, and develops publications such as Landmines magazine, and other public information items.

Resource Mobilization
The vast majority of U.N. mine-action activities are funded from voluntary donor contributions, so donor contributions are instrumental to the success of U.N. mine-action endeavours. As U.N. focal points, UNMAS coordinates resource mobilization for the U.N. system and manages the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action. Each year a consolidated "Portfolio of Mine-related Projects" is also prepared to outline funding needs, including brief descriptions and budget requirements for all U.N. mine-action programs and projects, by they implemented by UNDP, UNICEF or any other U.N. agency or program. UNMAS also confers on an ongoing basis with the donor community to discuss priorities and gaps in funding.

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