First Workshop on Regional Approaches to Stockpile Reduction in Southeast Europe

Daniele Ressler  
*Center for International Stabilization and Recovery*

Dave Diaz  
*PM/WRA*

Laurie Freeman  
*PM/WRA*

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insufficient consideration of the presence of landmine/ERW hazards in their area. While projects may begin with limited awareness of the potential problem, part of all of a project may be brought to a halt when landmines are encountered. This realization may also require that the project reconsider individual beneficiaries, since the effects of landmines can be very specific. Problems could be avoided with better use of information and appropriate planning.

The threat of landmine contamination may affect the specific plans of many sectors, including transportation (roads, bridges and railways), water, agriculture and social sectors (education, health and social welfare). Sector requirements for mine action are often not clearly reflected in national mine action plans, and sector development plans do not reflect sector needs for demining services. With more use of mine-action information, there is a greater chance that the need to resolve potential landmine problems will be incorporated into the national plans.

When landmine and ERW are not considered, the broad mission of a development organization may be compromised. There were several reports of government and NGO programs covering multiple areas in which mine-affected communities were excluded because there were not sufficient funds in the program budget. This occurred most commonly with programs addressing rehabilitation or access to education that exists or where to find it—a problem that is often much more widespread than mine-action information realizes, in spite of public information efforts. Often the total amount of land blocked by landmines is not large even when the countries are highly contaminated. Many development activities could carry out the full range of their activities and never encounter landmines.

Community-development organizations generally select priorities for reasons other than mine action. Many organizations dealing with local infrastructure and services have the option to shift to other sites, rather than rehabilitate a facility or area affected by mines.

Mine-action information may be overwhelming in detail or format and development organizations may not know how to select what is relevant. Development organizations may not consider information about landmine information because they do not deal with it frequently enough.

Many international development organizations assume that it is the responsibility of the national authorities to ensure that any demining required for externally financed projects is done on a timely basis. Development organizations do not understand the process of prioritizing sites for clearance.

Next Steps
Phase 1 of this project confirmed wide agreement among national mine-action programs that it is important to enhance the use of mine-action information by development partners. It also provided a map of potential client organizations and their information needs. In Phase 2, SAC will work with three national mine-action programs and consult with a range of development organizations. This collaboration will help identify the organizations’ specific information needs and prepare targeted information products to increase the overall availability and usefulness of mine-action information. It will also propose central-government policies to ensure that landmine information is considered in the planning and financing of development projects.

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by Danièle Ressler [Center for International Stabilization and Recovery] and F. David Dávila and Laurie Freeman [PM/WRA]

A first for a history of conflicts and the military build-up of weapons and ammunition in Southeast Europe, the region now faces searing challenges arising from the presence of and need to reduce excess, unstable and loosely secured conventional weapons and munitions. Illustrating the dangers are explosions in recent years of ammunition stocks in Albania, Bulgaria and Serbia, which have resulted in considerable damage, in addition to killing scores of civilians and displacing hundreds. In an effort to begin addressing these issues, the first South East Europe Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction workshop was held 5–7 May in Zagreb, Croatia.

This SEE RASK workshop was the first of a series of regional workshops developed to initiate discussions regarding national and regional plans for stockpile reduction and management. This regional approach is a concept born from the Adriatic Charter’s September 2008 Chiefs of Defense Conference, when officials recognized that a regional approach might improve efficiency and extend limited resources to address the dual threats of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion.

Participants:
The workshop had more than 50 participants, with senior-level Croatian General Staff and Ministry of Defense officials, as well as representatives from other international organizations and other stockpile threat policy representatives. Representatives from the Ministries of Defense and General Staffs of Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia also attended the event. Kosovo and Macedonia were invited to the first RASK workshop but declined to attend, though they may participate in future meetings. Other guest organizations included:

- Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at James Madison University
- Explosive Ordnance Demilitarization Solutions
- International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance
- NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
- Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre
- Regional Centre for Security Cooperation
- Small Arms Survey
- Southeastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
- United Nations Development Programme

Robert T. Bruce, Director of the SEE RASK workshop, delivered the opening remarks. As Director of the Regional Centre for Security Cooperation in South Eastern Europe, he outlined the dual threats of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion. Bruce envisioned a future where the SEE region would be able to work together to address the stockpile reduction challenge. He noted the need to create a regional approach to reducing stockpiles in SEE, and that a regional approach would be more efficient and extend limited resources to address the dual threats of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion.

The remainder of the first day consisted of speakers and panels approaching stockpile reduction as a threat affecting the whole region of Southeast Europe. The speakers discussed the importance of working together to address the stockpile reduction challenge, and the need for a coordinated regional approach. The speakers also discussed the importance of working with international organizations and other stakeholders to address the stockpile reduction challenge.

The second day of the workshop focused on regional approaches to stockpile reduction. The speakers discussed the importance of working together to address the stockpile reduction challenge, and the need for a coordinated regional approach. The speakers also discussed the importance of working with international organizations and other stakeholders to address the stockpile reduction challenge.

The workshop was held in Zagreb, Croatia, on 5–7 May 2008. The workshop was organized by the Regional Centre for Security Cooperation in South Eastern Europe, with funding from the United Nations Development Programme. The workshop was attended by representatives from the Ministries of Defense and General Staffs of Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia, as well as other international organizations and other stockpile threat policy representatives. The workshop was designed to initiate discussions regarding national and regional plans for stockpile reduction and management, and to develop a regional approach to addressing the stockpile reduction challenge.

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municipal stockpiles in Chelopechene, Bulgaria, and Giresiz, Albania, in 2008—to understand what went wrong and how communities were affected. Another group of experts from the U.S. European Command, U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency and NATO reviewed best practices and guidelines for physical security stockpile management. The directly engaged the participants themselves. As Acting Director of PMWRA James Lawrence noted in his opening remarks, the goal of the RASR workshop concept is to unite practitioners dealing with small arms stockpile and reduction issues in order to focus on real, practical issues and case studies, share information, and reduce excession. These include the lack of understanding and support from national policy-makers, particularly in the legislatures, variations and conflicts in national laws, policies and regulations, and a lack of donor coordination leading to gaps and overlaps in bilateral and multinational projects. Further complicating the pursuit of a regional approach are low levels of trust between governments, low levels of commitment among political leaders and requirements for the use of funding.

To address these challenges in the short term, participants agreed that conventional weapons destruction should be a renewing agenda item during regular high-level conferences of Defense Ministers and Chiefs of Defense in the region. They also suggested reiterating the South Eastern Europe Regional Implementation Plan, which was agreed to in 2001 and since then implemented by the Southeast Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Rather than reinventing the wheel, this restored focus would enable regional governments to build on existing policies in order to secure regional cooperation. In the long term, there need to be greater efforts are needed to educate lawmakers and policymakers about the threat of excess, unstable, and loosely secured conventional weapons and munitions. These awareness-raising efforts should be based on findings obtained from independent research on the scope of the problem. One aim could be to organize a regional summit on this issue at which donors are present to make pledges that will ensure a successful outcome.

Infrastructure. In addition to another vehicle that can facilitate a regional approach. Participants recommended building and/or updating facilities, identifying facilities that can serve as regional destruction centers, improving maintenance of facilities and personnel systems, and conducting additional stockpile-reduction operations. The obstacles to such activities are largely monetary. Governments can request lack funds for large infrastructure projects and are hampered by the sheer size of the challenge. Information regarding the size and content of stockpiles in each country is also lacking. Regional destruction centers face additional legal hurdles that prevent weapons and ammunition from being transported across national borders. To advance infrastructure improvements, participants recommended undertaking a study to identify how, where and to what extent funds can be reused through collaborative efforts. They also suggested a study assessing the national capabilities in the region and how they could be expanded to be more cost-effective. Governments of the region could prioritize high-profile, “quick-win” projects, such as demining events or stockpile security improvements to create momentum and political will for further stockpile-reduction efforts. Training, education and capacity building. Training, education and capacity building are other important vehicles for fostering a regional approach to stockpile reduction. Not only will such efforts enhance democratic and regional technical expertise, promote greater understanding and support from policymakers and increase access to national and regional resources, but joint training will also help build trust among the militaries and defense ministries of the region. The main obstacles to regional capacity are the lack of knowledge and regional coordination. Initially, all best practice documents and guides should be translated into the languages of the region to increase accessibility. The establishment of a central repository for best practices, lessons learned, and related documents could provide a forum for information sharing and collaboration. The development of shared training syllabs and facilities would not only cut costs, but would also eliminate an important tool for sharing knowledge and building trust. The region could consider establishing physical security and stockpile management and conventional weapons destruction as a recurring part of the technical-level conferences held for exporters in the region.

Sharing of information and best practices. Participants recognized the need for information exchange, transparency in technical and policy mechanisms, and enhanced regional coordination of practices where appropriate. In the short term, participants recommended a collabora-

day concluded with a panel of speakers from the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs’ Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. Department of State, and the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency, which summarized existing efforts, guidelines and best practices related to the reduction and “right sizing” of stockpiles. The theme for the second day was national and regional coordination in Southeast Europe. Representatives from Albania, Bos- nia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro offered details of their countries’ national policies and plans for stockpile security and reduction. Speakers from three international organizations (NATO, OSCE and SEESAC) discussed how their organizations are assisting specific nations (NATO, OSCE and SEESAC) discussed how their organizations are assisting specific
Looking to the Future

Regional workshops are one aspect of the RASR Initiative, which will develop various coordination mechanisms for governments in the region. The workshops will be held periodically to develop a dialogue among relevant government officials so they can share information, advice and lessons learned, as well as coordinate efforts when and where appropriate. Another RASR workshop is planned for fall 2009.

For more information and announcements, visit http://www.mineaction.org

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The CIR system replaces traditional plastic-of-Porus bandages with a specially made fabric casting bag filled with polyurethane beads. By placing the casting bag around the residual limb, a negative mold is formed once vacuum suction is applied. The mold can then be removed and used to create a final prosthesis quickly and easily. The technique was developed with funding from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Institute on Disabilities Rehabilitation Research for the CIR’s Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on

was given a new leg and an opportunity to move past the trauma of her injury. Mosha’s right forelimb was severed in a landmine blast two years ago along the Thai-Burmese border when she was only seven months old. Unlike Motsala, who was fitted temporarily with a sawn-off carraige leg before being fitted with a permanent prosthesis, Mosha was fitted using the CIR Casting System, providing her with a perfectly fitted prosthesis in a very short period of time. Mosha was fitted with her prosthesis at the Elephant Hospital of the Thai Elephant Conservation Center.

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Kathryn Jackson is a Grant Writer at the Center for International Rehabilitation. Jackson previously volunteered at the Columbia AIDS Task Force in Columbia, Ohio, where she participated in training and education programs focused on outreach. She has a bachelor’s degree in English literature from the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor.

Kathryn Jackson
Grant Writer
The Center for International Rehabilitation
222 Merchandise Mart Plaza
Suite 1562
Chicago, IL 60654 USA
Tel: 312 365 4070
E-mail: KJackson@cirnetwork.org

Prostheses for Pachyderm

Mosha enjoys a walk with her new prosthesis and Dr. Theorlida Jivacate of Thailand’s Prostheses Foundation, Daniele Ressler is a Program Manager and Research Specialist at the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery. She holds a Master of Science in conflict and development studies from the University of London’s School of Oriental and African Studies. She has also studied in both Cape Town, South Africa, earning a Certificate for Applied Studies in peace-building, and Harward, Kenya. Ressler has previously worked in the fields of conflict mediation and youth counseling.

Daniele Ressler
Program Manager
Mine Action Information Center
Center for International Stabilization and Recovery
James Madison University
800 S. Main Street, MSC-4922
Harrisonburg, VA 22807 USA
Tel: 540 568 2315
Fax: 540 568 8170
E-mail: ResslerDA@jmu.edu
Web site: http://msn.jmu.edu/