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Closing the Circle

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by both sides across the border along with an Israeli ground invasion into Lebanon. In particular, Israel dropped or fired over a million cluster munitions into Lebanon land.1

The destruction was systemic, leading to an environment at the end of the war that is not only very unkempt but also continues to be critically dangerous to civilians due to the massive quantity of bombs, bomblets, shells and rockets that remain everywhere in southern Lebanon. To the outside world, it seems during Israel’s air strikes there was little difference established between the military objectives and civilian targets. Bridges, roads and airports were destroyed to strategically cripple enemy forces; yet this also made the delivery of humanitarian aid not only hard but nearly impossible.

Suggestions for Protecting Civilians
Many measures can be taken to ensure the safety of civilians, particularly with the increased threat they face in modern warfare. In the Middle East and other regions at risk of conflict, it is important to protect civilians by providing the poorest countries with bunkers and other protective installations in the main cities during peaceful periods, with a particular focus on schools and hospitals.

Additionally, international law should strictly enforce the convention against killing civilians and destroying civilian areas during conflict, proscribing under criminal law those who do not follow this convention. The United Nations Security Council should also give the power—and be willing to use it—to stop any war in which genocide is observed. Finally, in mine action, activities need to focus on providing updated awareness campaigns that are informed by the changing reality of recent conflicts to ensure that children and other vulnerable people are protected. See Endnotes, page 109

Conference on Women in Armed Groups, Human Rights

In November 2005, Geneva Call and the Program for the Study of International Organization(s) from the Geneva-based Graduate Institute of International Studies held a workshop in Ethiopia entitled “Women in Armed Opposition Groups in Africa and the Promotion of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights.” The workshop sought ways to strengthen international humanitarian and human-rights law within African armed groups and their political groups. Thirty-nine female leaders from armed opposition groups and civil society from countries currently involved in conflict or recently involved in the post-conflict recovery process came together for the conference. The workshop also sought to increase the international community’s understanding of and ability to work with African armed groups.

Four topics were discussed in working groups during the workshop:
1. Humanitarian law
2. Human-rights law
3. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
4. Transition into governance roles

The final report from the conference, which presents information and analyses that came out of these four thematic working groups, is available in English and will soon be available in French. The report can be downloaded at http://www.genevaccall.org. If you would like a printed copy of the report, e-mail info@genevaccall.org.

News Brief

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The authors present a critique of the International Mine Action Standards currently in use. After highlighting gaps in IMAS related to assessment and survey, an improved aspect of mine-action planning methodology is presented, which includes a prioritization component using a socioeconomics approach. The result is LIRA: landmine impact combined with a new measurement of risk assessment. This updated model can contribute to improved safety, quality and productivity of landmine action through more effective strategic planning tools.

by Eddie Banks | EOD World Services | and Rob Shahrar | Environment and Infrastructure Group of Companies

The vast majority of mine action is paid for with donor funds, but are these funds always utilized for the optimum benefit of the affected population? Any money spent on bureaucracy leaves what is available for reducing the physical, social, psychological and economic effects of conflict. Many argue, with some justification, that attempting to impose international mine-action standards (or even International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards) on populations clearly unaccustomed to these methods can, without appropriate managerial training and support, jeopardize lives for the sake of attaining a standard they may not be capable of achieving. Any increase in safety and quality requirements must be measured against productivity; in other words, any funds used to pay for stringently high safety and quality standards must be measured against the lives lost and injuries inflicted by the consequent reduction in clearance activities.

The original intention for standards such as the International Mine Action Standards was that they should form a baseline by which pragmatic implementation of a foundation of "standards" would take into account the particular situation in each affected country. However, recent interpretations of the text illustrate that the IMAS have now become a vehicle for those who wish to impose standards. The cost of some projects has been dramatically increased by those using IMAS as a quality-assurance/quality-control vehicle to increase demands on or delay the work, whether through a lack of understanding, a difference in interpretation of the text or by design. In some cases, the IMAS documents seem to confuse rather than clarify due to unclear text and a plethora of paperwork. In one specific area—asessment and survey—the IMAS appear to have lost direction. The aims and objectives of these standards (and the number of other documents and references) made throughout the IMAS are the subject of this article.

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While we acknowledge the IMAS have created a sound foundation, they have also created a mountain of documentation.

Commercial or Social Precedence

The IMAS and GMAA concentrate on the local issue, and admittedly this is where the greatest impact is perceived, from the economic repercussions for families, small communities and medical facilities to the emotional aspect of inquiries and deaths; but is this perception correct? Take for example the mines and UXO in Kuwait, Iran, Iraq and Angola, to name just a few. The local communities in these countries are devastated as anywhere else in the world, with injuries, deaths and economic hardships, among other problems. Yet, mines and UXO in these and other countries also detailing or delayed registration of national commercial activities such as oil and gas exploration and extraction, denying the affected countries millions of dollars each and every day, which could have been used to help solve the mine and UXO problem.

Making an emotional response or local considerations alone to distance clearances in effect delays the economic recovery of the country, maintains dependency on donor funds, and restrains the development of local and regional activities. A national priority that creates economic regeneration and growth cannot be totally ignored due to local and social considerations, in just the same way that death and injuries cannot be totally disregarded due to the demands for national commercial purposes. Commercial and social aspects are important but they have to be considered, but separately and collectively, indeed, prioritization in order to create regional and national economic growth will most likely be applied in some cases to establish the sustainable features for future mine-action activities. Each country and each region within a country is different and these differences need to be defined. The defining process must be realistic, coordinated and integrated with all authorities. It must address, identify, assess and determine priorities, proactively assessing the feasibility of being implemented and be built on experience and practice. Some believe a number of activities cannot be accurately measured. An example is the importance in community area of communications and transportation infrastructure during the emergency phase, a time when medical services and accessibility to clean water are crucial. Therefore, the act of prioritization, another issue that the GMAA, LIS and others fail to address, is one of the most important aspect of strategic planning.

Within this SLA framework, the LIRA process should be:

Purposive, aiming its methods and objectives
Focused, concentrating on the critical factors
Adaptive, responding to issues and realities
Practical, fully involving the public
Unambiguous, being clear and easily understandable
Rigorous, employing “best practice” methodology
Practical, establishing mitigation measures that work
Credible, carried out with objectivity and professionalism
Efficient, imposing lower-cost burden on proponents

The LIRA process is defined as a series of phases including: screening, to decide if and at what level LIRA should be applied; scoping, to identify the important issues and prepare terms of reference; impact analysis, to predict the effects of specific clearance activities and evaluate their significance; mitigation, to establish measures to prioritize high-, medium- and low-impact activities; reporting, to prepare the information necessary for decision-making; review, to check the quality of the LIRA report; decision-making, to approve or reject the specific clearance activities and set conditions; follow-up, to monitor, manage and audit post clearance impacts; and public involvement, to inform and consult with stakeholders.

The “impact analysis” or detailed study phase of LIRA should include three activities: identification of impacts more specifically, prediction of the characteristics of major impacts, and evaluation of the significance of residual impact. In this process, a number of risk-identification methods might be utilized. These could include checklists, matrices, networks, overlays and geographical information systems, expert systems, and professional judgment (see Table 1). Ultimately, the choice of a LIRA method would depend on a number of factors, including the type and size of the activity, the type of alternatives being considered, the nature of the likely impacts, the availability of impact-identification methods, and the existence of the LIRA team with their use. In addition, the resources available would impact the method of LIRA used as cost, information, time and personnel inevitably vary with each specific case.

Information required for establishing the measurement tool and/or baseline conditions (often elicited through a baseline survey) includes current conditions, current and expected trends, off-mine activities already being implemented and the effects of other activities yet to be implemented. Information gathered as baseline data would include but not be limited to general information of contamination (national, provincial and local), socio-economic characteristics (national, provincial and local), environmental factors (provincial and local), stakeholder expectations (international, national and local), and political issues (international, national, provincial and local).

Areas where it is deemed necessary to utilize a Strategic Landscape Assessment program would include:

- Sector-specific policy, plans and programs
- Spatial and land-use plans
- Regional development programs
- Natural-resource management strategies
- Legislative and regulatory bills
- Investment and lending activities
- International aid and development assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Link action to impact</td>
<td>- Difficult to distinguish direct and indirect impacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Good method for displaying EIHA results</td>
<td>- Significant potential for double-counting of impacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Can become very complex if used beyond simplified version</td>
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Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages of impact-identification methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist</th>
<th>Simple</th>
<th>Fast and easy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Matrices</td>
<td>Link action to impact</td>
<td>Link action to impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networks</td>
<td>Link action to impact</td>
<td>Useful in simplified form to check for</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIS and Computer Expert System</td>
<td>Excellent for impact identification and analysis</td>
<td>Excellent for impact identification and analysis</td>
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http://conventions.minedownwards.org/2006/issue2/issue2/12_i2.html

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[10.2 | winter 2006 | journal of mine action | feature | 12]
Rob Shahmir

To Walk the Earth in Safety Chronicles U.S. Mine-Clearance Efforts


Department officials announced that, owing in part to U.S. assistance, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Guatemala and Honduras would not appear in the report because they have become free from landmine impact. Attention is also paid to U.S. policy toward landmines and total U.S. contributions to landmine action, which exceed $1 billion.

The Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, divisions of the Department of Defense and U.S. Army, James Madison University’s Mine Action Information Center and several in-country centers are profiled in the report. There is also coverage of the DOS Quick Reaction Demining Force, the only standing humanitarian-demining unit with worldwide deployment capabilities.

A PDF version of the sixth edition is available at http://emipl21.com/kj/0e. To request a printed copy of To Walk the Earth in Safety, e-mail your complete mailing address and postal (or ZIP) code to John Stevens at stevej@state.gov.

Important Requirements

1. Ground-penetration depth up to 30 centimeters (12 inches).
2. Multiple operations with the tiller, to break up partially deman-
erized or remaining mines and explosive components not com-
pletely destroyed by the till.
3. Effective depth control for both the flail and tiller systems.
4. Effective monitoring of drive control to be displayed inside the cab.
5. Global-positioning-system navigation for directional control.
6. Driver on board to intervene if needed with difficult topogra-
phy and obstacles.
7. Quality track record for all relevant data to be printed from data loggers.

When the tiller has the potential to be capable of destroying all mines, provided the tiller rotates clockwise with a rotation speed at least 300–400 revolutions per minute and is fitted with special cut-
ing tools to destroy all mines, avoiding skipping, buying and low waves.1 In general, a TQA program provides a modern, overall quality concept of a company or system.

It is easy to see if the process is capable as not by looking at the area after the demining process. The area has to be homogeneous after a uniform process as this is the basis for a capable process. This is confirmed in various other publications.1 The till process requires intensive follow-up verification of clearance—additional demining operation by hand and dog—which is time-

need urgent to “close the circle” by providing and utilizing the missing information.

Conclusion

Some years ago the major issue in mine action was about safety and quality versus produc-
tivity. Now is the time to take a more pragmatic approach and look at all three subjects in a balanced manner. A foundation based on standards has now been accepted by the international community as essential to maintaining quality and safety. However, control must be exerted by donors not to fund studies and improvements that fail to produce a noticeable improvement in the quality of life of those whose daily struggle is one of survival.

What is critical is the need to modify the present IMAS and the other documents in order to conduct strategic planning in a systematic manner. Policies concentrating on local aspects need to take a broader view and a recognition of the importance of prioritization is needed, which must be initiated at the earliest possible opportunity even with the base improvement. The tiller is that less effective in some places than it is in others is simply demining in the wrong place and is an intellectual use of time, effort and limited financial resources. Currently the documentation presented does not complete the picture or provide a coherent approach; there is now an

Mechanical demining is an important and essential part of any demining process, and quality-assurance methods must constantly be revised to address the balance between safety and efficiency. Based on experience from the MineWolf mechanical demining experience, the tiller system would improve the demining process significantly, thereby increasing speed and reducing the costs of demining operations.

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Banks and Shahmir: Closing the Circle