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USCENTCOM 99

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Spring 1999 - Volume 3, No. 1

- ▶ Table Of Contents
- ▶ Journal Staff
- ▶ Call For Papers
- ▶ E*Mail the Journal
- ▶ MAIC Website
- ▶ Journal Archives

USCENTCOM 99

By S. Stewart

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Information in this issue may be out of date. [Click here](#) to link to the most recent issue.

The United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) is located at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. Within USCENTCOM is the Humanitarian Demining (HD) Office, which performs program management for all U.S. HD efforts in the Middle East. The mission statement of the USCENTCOM HD Office is:



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"To provide the best possible Humanitarian Demining (HD) Support to the Components and Country Teams responsible for executing and sustaining HD operations in our AOR. We will make coordinated program recommendations and decisions that support overall CINCCENT priorities and initiatives. Our support will provide expert assistance in planning, information management, and logistics. We will ensure our support is responsive, innovative, cost effective, and proactive."

The U.S. Central Command's demining program [area of responsibility \(AOR\)](#) encompasses much of the near and middle east including the countries of Afghanistan, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Sudan, Somalia, Tajikistan, and Yemen. The estimated number of landmines currently placed in the region exceeds 48,000,000. For program management purposes, the USCENTCOM HD Office has assigned its' component commands specific countries for program development and execution. Each component is allocated the following countries:

- U.S. Central Command-Army: Jordan, Egypt
- U.S. Central Command-Navy: Yemen
- U.S. Central Command-Marines: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia
- U.S. Central Command- Air Force: Oman

Currently, due to budget constraints caused by Hurricane Mitch, only limited demining training activities are occurring within CENTCOM's AOR. However, the program has had marked success in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Currently these programs are on hold due to the fighting.

USCENTCOM support to these nations will resume at the cessation of hostilities. HD Programs in Egypt and Jordan are in the startup phase and are scheduled to begin in earnest in the fall of 1999. Oman is on the HD horizon and requirements for this program are currently being examined/explored. USCENTCOM is currently half way through a HD training program in Yemen, which will be discussed later in this article.

USCENTCOM's concept of operation is in four phases:

***Survey and Planning Phase**

- Policy assessment and Requirements Determination Survey Conducted
- Plans completed and approved
- Dip Note & MOUs signed
- Resources approved and allocated by IWG

***Infrastructure Development Phase**

- Purchase equipment, train U.S. forces, renovate facilities, etc.
- HN identifies manpower and prepares for training phase

***Training Phase**

- Organization and Procedures
- Establish Demining Headquarters
- Provide equipment and training
- Mine Awareness
- Assist with training and plans
- Campaign Plan Development
- Survey and Information Management
- Assist with training and research
- Geographic Information System
- Mine Detection, Disposal, & QA
- Provide equipment and training
- UXO Disposal
- Medical and Victim Assistance

***Sustainment Phase**

- Provide Sustainment training (maintenance training, mine awareness, etc.)
- HD LNO Team in country
- Assist with development of strategies to obtain funds to Sustain HD operations

Yemen

The Yemen HD program has several unique features which make it different from most HD programs.

Yemen is plagued with mines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) from a civil war that took place between 1990-1994. According to Ministry of Defense (MOD) officials, approximately 70,000 of the estimated 150,000 mines laid during the civil war still remain. Most of the mines were laid primarily in the southern region around Aden and were laid erratically without mapping, marking, or fencing. Most of the mines are Russian, American, and British. Yemen organized small groups of soldiers to remove the mines but due to a lack of demining equipment and training they had only very limited success. In March 1995, the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA) attempted to train deminers but this initiative was unsuccessful.

In October 1997, USCENTCOM headed a Requirements Determination Site Survey (RDSS) to assess Yemeni requirements for and commitment to establishing an indigenous demining headquarters and capability. During this survey representatives from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) and Radda Barnen (Swedish Save the Children) committed to significant support. Much of this support was to be contingent upon U.S. involvement in the establishment of the demining headquarters/capability. In November 1997, the Interagency Working Group for Demining approved Yemen's request for participation in the US Government Demining Program.

NAVCENT has been designated to lead the demining effort in Yemen. A Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS) was conducted 15 May – 28 May 1998. The purpose of the PDSS was to identify all program facilities, identify all training tasks, identify all equipment and logistical requirements, and develop a long-term plan for U.S. support to Yemen.

The most unique aspect of the Yemen HD program is the organizational structure. The Yemen government approved a Yemen HD organization that will be very beneficial to achieving the end state of an indigenous, self-sustaining demining capability. The organization has the Commander of the National Demining Center working for the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, not the Minister of Defense (MOD). The Minister of Cabinet Affairs is below the President of Yemen but above the other ministers. The personnel that will man the organization will come from MOD but the Minister of Cabinet Affairs is overall responsible. Because the demining personnel come out of the MOD substantial savings are realized in terms of salaries alone. In most normal HD programs, salaries may account for up to 60% of the programs' budget!

A committee was established for all donors to have oversight on their donations. A board was established to provide the ministers, governors,

Yemeni civilian organizations, etc. a way of influencing (and benefiting from) the demining program. This Yemeni national level HD organization allows donors to donate resources without giving to the MOD and it provides a mechanism for oversight. This unique feature allows for greater integration and coordination between the Yemen HD organization and discusses

In most nations the MOD controls all HD organizations, which are usually Army Engineers. As a result, military engineers because of competing demands for their capabilities and resources conduct HD on a part-time basis. This organizational set up also inhibits donations from International Organizations (IO), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), and Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO) which are extremely reluctant to engage in HD efforts with the military. In Yemen this situation has been avoided which now maximizes the available resources and enables HD to be a full time effort and benefit from donations from the IOs, NGOs, and PVOs. Some of these donors are: UNMAS, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, Radda Barnen, Adventist Relief and Development Agency, Handicap International, the countries of Italy, Japan, Canada, Norway, Poland, and France.

Yemen wants one Regional Demining Center in Aden (with a training academy) and possibly another one in the future. The Regional Demining Center will provide the support for three companies of deminers and will be the "gateway" for local civilian organizations to gain access to the military and the Regional HD center.

- The training concept NAVCENT developed follows:

- 27 June-23 Oct 98: **Survey and Planning Phase & Infrastructure Development Phase:** Computer courses will be taught (by local computer schools) to Yemenis who will fill the National and Regional Demining Center staff positions. Training material will be ordered and training facilities refurbished.
- 24 Oct-17 Dec 98: **Staff Training Phase.** U.S. trainers will conduct training for the National and Regional Staffs and the Yemeni demining instructors (academy cadre). This training will be conducted at the academy in Aden.
- 18 Dec- 29 Jan: **Break for Ramadan and Christmas.**
- 13 Mar- 1 June 99: **Demining Training Phase.** The first two classes of deminers will come through the academy. U.S. instructors with the Yemeni instructors as assistants will teach the first class. Yemeni instructors with U.S. instructors as assistants will teach the second class.
- 2-29 June 99: **Demining Operations Phase.** The U.S. trainers will observe and guide the demining companies in actual mine clearance operations.
- 30 June 99- **End State: Sustainment Phase:** NAVCENT will provide

support to the Yemeni program as necessary. There will be full time U.S. presence (one civil affairs LNO team) in country until Sept 99, then quarterly thereafter.

For the coming year, CENTCOM will be extremely active with the training actions in Yemen, site surveys and country plan completion in Jordan, pre-planning meetings in Egypt, and hopefully, completion of the program in Eritrea and Ethiopia. In future years, CENTCOM hopes to expand its efforts in the Humanitarian Demining arena throughout its AOR.

For more about U.S. Central Command:

<http://www.centcom.mil/>