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State Department The Demining 2010 Initiative

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The Journal of Humanitarian Demining

Profile

State Department The Demining 2010 Initiative

Colleen Pettit, HDIC

Winter, 1998

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Basic Description

The Demining 2010 Initiative is an initiative led by the United States to develop and marshal resources for global humanitarian demining operations and assistance. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to end the threat of landmines to civilians by the year 2010.

The Current Situation

An estimated 100 million landmines in over 60 countries kill 26,000 people each year. To stop these needless deaths, the U. S. has committed over \$153 million to humanitarian demining programs since 1993, leading the world in demining support. In fiscal year 1998, the U. S. will spend an unprecedented \$80 million for humanitarian demining efforts. Despite the high level of U.S. and international support at present, more support is needed. At the current level, removing landmines from around the world will take several decades, economic development and perpetuating destruction to the environment and humanity in mined countries. The U.S., consequently, has instituted the Demining 2010 Initiative, the global campaign to eradicate all landmines that threaten civilians by 2010.

Mission Statement

The objective of this initiative is to accelerate global humanitarian demining efforts: specifically to increase the worldwide public and private resources devoted to demining by a factor of five, \$1 billion, 2010. To accomplish this goal, the initiative will coordinate donors, demining experts, and assistance recipients to

- expand operational demining and related assistance programs,
- agree on enhancements for the exchange of demining information, and
- optimize the use of worldwide demining resources.

Approach

Appointment of a Special Representative

To provide leadership for the Demining 2010 Initiative, the Clinton Administration asked Ambassador Karl F. Inderfurth to serve as the U. S. Special Representative of the President and the Secretary of State for Global Humanitarian Demining. The Special Representative expands the global demining effort by coordinating the efforts of donors, deminers, and those affected by mines as well as the efforts of governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector. The Special Representative does not manage a global demining program; each country, particularly those closest to the problem, manages its own demining program.

Appointment of an Advisory Board

The Clinton Administration also appointed a panel of distinguished American leaders to provide policy advice and to garner national and international support for the initiative.

Conference in Washington, D.C.

The U. S. will host a conference in Washington, D. C. on the initiative. This conference will consist of donor countries, mine-affected countries, international organizations, and relevant NGOs. During the conference, these participants will

- commit firmly to increasing their demining support,
- develop ways to improve the coordination of demining operations,
- develop ways to improve the international exchange of and access to demining information, and
- form a global strategy to remove all landmines that threaten civilians by 2010.

Intensification of U.S. Demining Program

To lead the Demining 2010 Initiative, the U. S. will expand its U. S. Humanitarian Demining Program. For fiscal year 1998, the U. S. has allocated \$77 million to the program. The U. S. seeks to increase its commitment in 1999 and beyond.

Remarks on the Demining 2010 Initiative

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright

"As Secretary of State, I welcome the President's Initiative for several reasons. Accelerating mine clearance will help nations struggling to recover from war to replant their fields, rebuild their economies, and resettle their refugees. It will reduce the long term humanitarian costs of caring for the victims of landmines. It will underline the message that we join with other nations . . . in sending, is wrong to endanger civilians through the use of landmines. And above all, it will prevent the killing or maiming of thousands of innocent people every year."

U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen

"We [the U.S.] have been the leader in being part of the solution [to the landmine problem]. What this initiative is to ask other countries to join with us in becoming part of the solution, as well."

Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State for Global Humanitarian Demining Karl Inderfurth "On a personal basis, let me say that I feel deeply about this subject [demining]. I have seen the victims of landmines around the world, and there are far too many of them. Every 22 minutes of every day there is another victim, a life lost or a life destroyed."

And who is responsible for producing the majority of these landmines?

Questions to Special Representative Inderfurth and His Answers

Q: China has been described as a "Saudi Arabia of landmines." Did that subject come up in discussions with President Jiang?

Inderfurth: Well, I didn't take part in those discussions. I'm not sure exactly why that reference would be made to China. China certainly is involved in the landmine issue. It has its own stockpile of landmines, and we certainly want to see China become involved in the overall issue, including in the humanitarian side.

Q: Well, I think the name comes from the fact that they turn out millions of these little \$4-jobs that are made of plastic and can blow off a leg.

Inderfurth: They do. We will be talking to the Chinese about this. We have been doing this in Geneva and in other places. I intend to talk to them about what they might be able to contribute in terms of the humanitarian demining initiative. They do have deminers, and they can, I think, make a contribution to what we will be asking them to do.

Q: I was just wondering what kind of access you have or hope to have in Afghanistan, for example, because a very difficult situation is there—politically, I mean, and militarily.

Inderfurth: Well, the situation in Afghanistan—actually, the United States made another \$1 million contribution, bringing up our total this year to \$4 million for demining activities in Afghanistan. There is a UN agency known as UNOCHA, which is doing the demining there. They have made progress. They continue to work, and that's going to be one of the priorities for this effort. It is one of the largest countries with a demining problem.

Q: Can you elaborate on your plans for Korea? What the plan is, if there is any type of schedule? I know Secretary Cohen talked about the alternatives, but is that just a research plan for now? Or what is going to happen?

Inderfurth: There is a distinction between the Korean problem and what I will deal with. The Korean issue very much relates to our overall landmine policy. Assistant Secretary Newsom is here to help out on the policy issues relating to Korea or the various goals that have been set, 2003 and 2006, for the targets for the United States to be able to move toward elimination of

landmines.

With respect to my part of this, the issue of what we will do for the alternatives, I'll focus on research and development for the efforts to demine and to clear the mine fields. Right now, as the Secretary said, a stick is still the best method for going after this. We need to do better. There are things like airborne detection systems that are being looked at, chemical neutralizing systems that could be addressed to this problem. More money, as the President stated last month, will be put into R&D for demining activities. That is what I'm going to be focusing my attention on.

Q: There have been several statements about the scope of this initiative. But could you just spell out exactly what mines are covered by it? And what are not?

Inderfurth: Anti-personnel landmines. The T-72 Chinese antipersonnel landmine and others made by other countries that are currently in the ground. There are estimates of over 100 million that are in the ground. Those are the ones that we're going after. These are the APL, not anti-tank.

Those that are posing threats to civilian populations, which is the vast bulk of the landmines placed around the world, are the ones we're after. We want to see more countries move—and some already are—into a mine-free category. The United States has demining activities in 17 countries today around the world. Others are being considered. Some of those are moving toward a mine-free status, and we want to see that take place with all of them.

Q: About Lebanon, the demining includes the security zone?

Inderfurth: Demining will be in all those areas where civilians are at risk. So we will be looking at that. I would have to get back to you on specific geographic areas. But again we're going to those large areas of countries around the world where civilians are at risk because of landmines leftover from wars no longer being fought.
