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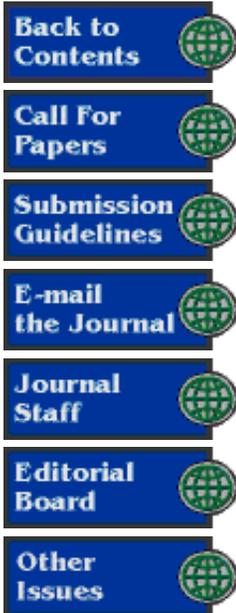
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The Journal of Humanitarian Demining



US Central Command

"USCENTCOM Demining Program: 1998 and Beyond"

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The USCENTCOM Humanitarian Demining (HD) Program has recently undergone a dramatic change in direction. This article will describe our old program, our new program, and our expected future.

Beginning in 1995, the USCENTCOM HD program was executed almost exclusively by the United States Special Operations Command, Central (USSOCCENT). In 1995-96, SOCCENT established an indigenous demining program in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Both Host Nation (HN) programs consist of a National Demining Headquarters, several demining companies, a mine awareness program, as well as historical analysis and data management sections. Today, both countries have strong indigenous demining programs that are progressing toward the goal of being free of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). The US Government provides support to both demining programs to continue their sustainment phase.

In the fall of 1997, CINCCENT's desire to provide more engagement opportunities for all USCENTCOM components, coupled with SOCCENT's high operations tempo, led to a new concept for conducting demining operations in USCENTCOM's area of responsibility (AOR). The new concept has two key parts: (1) USCENTCOM headquarters staff will take over responsibility for the overall demining program and (2) the four service-component commanders will execute the demining program in "focus countries," with SOCCENT providing Special Operations Forces (SOF) trainers and assistance as required.

By elevating program management from SOCCENT to USCENTCOM, CINCCENT is better able to centrally plan the entire demining campaign, thus improving the interface with the Joint Staff, Department of Defense (DoD), Department of State (DoS), and Interagency Work Group (IWG). The USCENTCOM Demining Program is assigned to the Director, Plans and Policy (CCJ5). The CCJ5 is developing a campaign plan to provide procedures and guidance for executing specific country programs. The campaign plan is appropriate because, by definition, it provides for a series of related military operations to accomplish a common objective. Once the campaign plan is completed, CCJ5—in close coordination with the component commanders, the country teams, the HN, and non-government organizations (NGOs) operating in the HN—

will develop a plan for each IWG-approved country. To manage all the information associated with demining, CCJ5 will establish an information management system. This system will track mine and UXO statistical data, logistical information, budgetary information, and training information. To facilitate the logistical aspects of the program and remove the logistical burden from the components, CCJ5 will hire a civilian contractor to purchase and ship all necessary equipment and supplies.

A draft of USCENTCOM goals, objectives, and end-state is presented below. The final version of these goals, objectives, and end-state will be approved with the campaign plan in July 1998. Through its HD program, USCENTCOM hopes to achieve the following goals and objectives:

Goals

1. establish an indigenous demining capability in HNs that is self-sufficient and effective,
2. improve human welfare in HNs through mine awareness and training,
3. enhance regional and internal stability by building public confidence in the ability of the HN to meet the needs of the people,
4. improve the relationship between HNs and the United States,
5. encourage international cooperation and participation by other countries, international organizations, private organizations, and NGOs.

Objectives

- reduce civilian casualties from landmines and UXO (supports Goals 1, 2, & 3),
- provide HNs with equipment and training that significantly enhance their demining and mine awareness capability (supports Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5),
- encourage and facilitate international participation in HN demining programs (supports Goals 1, 2, & 5),
- improve military-to-military and military-to-civilian relationships with HNs (supports Goals 3 & 4),
- improve internal stability by assisting HNs with repatriating

- provide unique training opportunities for U.S. forces (supports Goals 1, 2, & 4).

The desired end-state is an "either-or" situation: either the establishment of a self-sustaining, indigenous HD program or the elimination of mines and UXO in every IWG-approved mine plagued country in USCENTCOM's AOR.

Component commanders will execute the demining program in their assigned "focus country." SOCCENT will provide SOF support and CCJ5 will provide planning, logistical, and demining expertise support as required. Having a single component focused on a specific country will help USCENTCOM build stronger relationships, develop HN military capabilities, become more familiar with countries in the AOR, and improve military-to-military and military-to-civilian relationships. Each component commander will be involved in the demining process as soon as possible and will carry that HN's demining program through to end state. US forces will be offered unique training to enhance their ability to provide high quality demining training.

Following is a list of countries with assigned components:

- Eritrea - MARCENT (I MEF)
- Ethiopia - MARCENT (I MEF)
- Jordan - ARCENT
- Egypt - ARCENT
- Yemen - NAVCENT
- Oman (if accepted into the program) - CENTAF

USCENTCOM's demining program grew from two countries in 1997 (Eritrea and Ethiopia) to five in 1998 (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Egypt, and Yemen). The United Nations runs the demining program in Afghanistan. Countries that might enter the program in the future are Pakistan, Oman, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, and Iran. Also, with USCENTCOM picking up the Central Asian States in the near future, more countries are likely to be added to our list (for example, Tajikistan).

USCENTCOM has dramatically changed the procedures for providing demining support to HNs; however, the changes are sure to be beneficial to both the HNs and USCENTCOM. The demining program is truly a win-win situation, offering the opportunity to help countries eliminate the threat of landmines and UXO while building strong and lasting relationships.

