Korea United:
North & South Set Aside Differences to Demine

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By Keith Feigenbaum, MAIC

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**Southeast Asia**

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**Air Combat Data**

The Defense Security Cooperation Agency's Tom Smith details the United State's efforts to create an informational and relational database for mine/UXO identification in Southeast Asia and its importance in targeting landmines.

**by Tom Smith, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Office of Humanitarian Demining**

One of the greatest challenges in the global effort to remove the deadly debris of war and conflict is the collection of records kept by the combatants from either side in the conflicts. In that regard, the United States has realized the importance of, and is making available, data from a variety of sources to assist with the survey and clearance work in Southeast Asia.

Since 1994, the humanitarian demining offices in the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) and U.S. Pacific Command, in conjunction with the Federal Resources Corporation and MR Technology Solutions, have been developing an informational/relation database derived from the separate declassified tapes of allied air combat and ground support operations conducted during the war in Indochina. The output of this analysis will provide nations in the region with accurate target and ordnance data so that host countries can set priorities for UXO clearance operations and assess the probability of UXO contamination in areas identified for economic development.

These combat missions were conducted in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam from 1965 to 1975. The original data system was developed by IBM in the early 1960s and captured daily air combat information on the Vietnam conflict in the National Combat Command Information Processing System (NIPS). The data (classified Top Secret) was maintained by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and in 1976 declassified and delivered to the National Archives for safekeeping.

Four major databases are being reviewed for information that will assist governments in determining the scope and scale of air bombardment, helping to prioritize bomb and mine clearance operations:

- **Files Accessed & Data Period**
  - **Combat Activities File (CACTA)**
    - October 1965 - December 1970
  - **Southeast Asia Database (SEADAB)**
    - January 1970 - June 1975
  - **Strategic Air Command's Combat Activities report (SACCOMCIT)**
    - June 1965 - August 1973
  - **Herbicide Data File (HERBS)**
    - July 1965 - February 1973

Other databases to be reviewed include the Combat Naval Gunfire Files, Mining Activity Files, and other files relating to friendly and opposing force base camp and artillery data.

Data in the air combat files includes specific mission numbers, type and number of aircraft, location of target, latitude/longitude coordinates, ordnance type, number of ordnance dropped, and additional information on downed aircraft.

The goal of this combined effort is to provide host nation mine action offices with geospatial information (maps, digital, and other data) to support humanitarian demining surveys, setting priorities for demining operations, training, and assessment of the mine and UXO threat to economic development activities. The recovered data are being incorporated into geospatial databases for analysis by the host nation mine action centers using Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

Information for Laos has been retrieved, incorporated into a relational database, and installed at the headquarters of the Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Program (UXO LAO) in the capital city of Vientiane. The air combat information is displayed with vector or raster geospatial data and used to plan UXO clearance operations and to assess the probable impact of UXO on economic development projects.

Herbicide mission data has also...
been incorporated into the GIS at UXO Lao. Herbicide mission data was obtained from the U.S. Armed Services Center for Research of Unit Records (CERU) that is also the source for substantiation of veteran's claims of herbicide contact. Data includes the original HERBS tapes plus man-portable, truck, and helicopter missions that were conducted during the conflict.

The partnership between the DSCA and its contractors is also in the process of developing a user-friendly information and relational database and look-up tables to better assist the end user in planning for and prioritizing bomb clearance missions in specific areas of the country. A prototype internet-accessible version of the geospatial data is also in the developmental phase and will make it easier for host nations to access the data without a major investment in information technology equipment.

Maintaining the work on this project is essential for continuing assistance to Laos and possible expansion to the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC) and the newly established Vietnamese Centre for Treating Technology Bombs and Mines. The project will continue to support government's engagement strategy in the region.

In October 2000, a senior Vietnamese military delegation visited the United States to observe demining training activities and discuss ways in which the two countries could begin engagement by sharing information on demining issues. The delegation was extremely impressed with the bombing data retrieval project and, as a result, former President Clinton offered to share the information with the Vietnamese government during his historic visit to Vietnam in November 2000. Efforts are underway to coordinate the development and support of this initiative with the Government of Vietnam.

The use of this kind of data, and the integration with facilitating technologies, is unprecedented and is a clear demonstration of the value that technology can play in enhancing demining efforts, reducing costs, and building cooperative efforts between nations. The skills being learned through this process and the knowledge gained will most certainly be of value in other countries and other situations. This and other like initiatives will help ensure that the world will become mine safer rather than later.

Korea United

South Koreans are considering cooperating with SDE in clearing the estimated 20,000 mines on Mt. Chungi.

The End in Sight?

When the Korean soil thaws in early spring and the demining effort continues, the Koreas will be on route to clearing a path not just through the DMZ, but through years of silence and conflict. Though we may never know of advances in clearance operations and mine awareness on the northern side of the DMZ, the North's pledged cooperation with the South is a huge step towards reconnecting the once united peninsula. Even the People's Republic of China has pledged technical and personnel support to both Koreas' efforts, according to the August 23, 2000 Yonhap News. It could be said that the mine situation in Korea pales in comparison to such places as Bosnia-Herzegovina or Afghanistan. Perhaps this is true from a numerical standpoint. But when one considers a country divided in two by a guardmarked boundary and by stark ideological differences, there are few, if any, situations to rival that of the Koreas. If, in fact, the drive to clear a path for railroad and highway construction is successful in September 2001, the joint efforts of enemies will be responsible for partially reversing in about one year what took over 50 years of animosity to create.

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Pakistan: The Landmine Problem in Federally Administered Tribal Areas

After a decade of fighting, the effects of conflict beyond Pakistan's border with Afghanistan are seen everyday in border regions. With little government aid available, agencies like HSD are taking the initiative in the country's battle against mines.

by Faiz Muhammad Fayyaz, Executive Director, Human Survival & Development (HSD)

The ravages of the decade-long armed conflict in Afghanistan between the Soviets and anti-communist forces were not confined to Afghanistan. Rather, ill effects spilled over to neighboring countries. One affected country of note was Pakistan, which was used as a base for war activities. Pakistan served as a home to arms depots and camps for training guerrillas, and as a passageway for logistic supplies and other activities for the coordination of the war effort. In addition, thousands of refugees crossed the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in search of safe harbor, rendering the border weaker and weaker throughout the war.

One of the most detrimental effects of the Afghan war on Pakistan was the thousands of landmines left behind in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Soviet troops dropped mines and bombs in FATA border towns in order to intimidate the local population and prevent any support of anti-communist forces. Although the Afghan war broke out in December 1979, it wasn't until the early-1980s that the landmine problem surfaced in the FATA. Of the seven tribal Agencies of the FATA, Bajaur and Kurram were the most effected, counting an alarming number of casualties.

Bajaur and Kurram have witnessed some of the worst casualties, which affected not just soldiers but women and children, as well. An entire disabled population now exists—a change that has affected the socio-economic fabric of the area. While the FATA was socially undeveloped previous to the war, it has regressed further as a result of mines. The region's inadequate health services must deal with a public health situation of tragic proportions. Agricultural land has been rendered unproductive. Once productive men responsible for earning livelihoods have not only been rendered unproductive, but have become liabilities. Children have been forced to perform hard labor and beg on the streets.

Assessment
In order to assess the depth of Pakistan's landmine problem, 1997 Nobel laureate Rae McGrath, an authority on landmines, visited Human Survival and Development (HSD) in the summer of 2000 at the behest of the Swiss Federation for Mine Clearance and Swiss