Rethinking Humanitarian Demining for Coalition Forces

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Introduction
When you first arrive as a member of the Multinational Brigade North (MBN(N)), you are full of promise. You know your team of highly trained professional soldiers will make a difference in the lives of those that live in BiH. Then set in. You six-month tour of duty doesn’t allow you time to finish what you started. So what is it you can do to make a difference in only six months? This exact question started the process of developing the National Guard Demining Initiative in BiH. There are multi-tudes of issues you can work to resolve in BiH. MBN(N) plays a supporting role in most of these, but we wanted to do something more. We wanted to bring a fresh idea to the area of operation (AO) that would make a significant impact on one of the most critical issues facing us. To make our choice, we focused on two key concerns: “What will have the biggest impact on the daily lives of the people?” and “What will instill confidence in the international community to speed up economic recovery?” We chose the issue of demining.

Rethinking How We Do Demining

The Modern Peacekeeping Environment

So why choose demining? As a military officer, I have always been told to trace the bottom line up front to make sure the situation is not as bad as it could be. If you look at the Dayton Peace Accord (DPA), this heavily mined area is probably the single most important factor affecting our continued support of two key military tasks.

"Provide a Safe and Secure Environment"

The first key military task afforded us is to "provide a safe and secure environment" in BiH. So far in 2003, mine strikes have caused 13 deaths and five serious injuries in the MBN(N) Area of Responsibility (AOR) alone. More than 2,100 sq km of BiH requires a Technical Survey to determine if the area is mined. 2 Technical evaluations have estimated that 400 sq km to 1,800 sq km of this suspect area will require "Clearance Operations" of some work that include mechanical and manual clearing techniques. The key property of these operations is they must meet humanitarian demining standards if we are to provide a permanent solution for a safe and secure environment.

"Maintain Freedom of Movement"

Hold on a minute. Military teams don’t perform humanitarian demining. So why are we focusing on this issue? Mainly because we have to. In the modern world of the coalition forces, the military is not always provided with defined limits for tasks that their forces must effectively perform to meet coalition objectives. This is especially true in the world of Stabilization and Security Operations (SSO) like the tasks we are currently performing in BiH and will soon perform in Iraq.

As we have seen in recent headlines, our military leaders are also realizing this truth. As you read this article, military leaders are working to implement these new priorities before they become roadblocks to success around the world. If we are to be successful in this transitional process, we must be active and focus on two key concerns:

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We chose the issue of demining.

Humanitarian Demining for coalition forces

By MAJ Tom Barnett and CPT Kyle Shaffer, MBN(N), SFOR 13, 3S(M), ARNG

In his book Progress in Humanitarian Demining: Technical and Policy Challenges, Richard Garnett has estimated it will take 1,000 years to demine the world based on today's technology and practices. A thousand years longer than to wait for a mine-free world. We must act now to change the world we are handing to our children and their children.

Since the formation of the BHMAC and the reorganization of its building military and diplomatic support for the initiative.

Time to Take It Up a Notch

Building Diplomatic and Military Support

To build this support, we need to show why this humanitarian demining effort would be successful where others failed. So what are the failings the initiative needed to answer? While some of the lack of success may be arranged by lack of resources, the main reason was due to inefficient, mismanagement and the appearance of corruption in the bureaucracy. To answer these concerns, we concentrated on four critical areas of focus.

1. An integrated demining effort is required: First was the need for a demining operation that is integrated from the state level down to the individual deminer. The current method of demining does not adequately integrate demining operations and wastes valuable time and resources. Military cleanance procedures, although well integrated and fast in nature, do not provide the 99.6 percent clearance level mandated by International Standards in SASSO environments. Our initiative must integrate mechanical, manual, and in situ operations, Explosive Detecting Dog Teams (EDDTs) and containment practices. Although we use these methods individually, they are not integrated at the level required to be as cost effectively, efficiently, safely, and as cost effectively, as is required: First was the need for a demining effort that would meet the mission of demining in BiH, and must be fully supported by the international community to speed up economic recovery.

2. The BHMAC and government controls: The BiH Demining Law of February 2002 set standards for BH demining in line with internationally recognized protocols. This law is crucial leverage for the success of demining in BiH and must be fully supported by the international community to speed up economic recovery.

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regional offices, some institutional coher­
ence has been achieved. However, many na­
tional militaries still view the decision cycle for prioritization and re­
sources allocation. By providing the
BHMAC with the initial funding, t he
ITF bears the burden to ensure that the
Office of the High Representative (OHUR),
and the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the
IC, and the IC can functionally coordinate
our relationship with the ITF but reduce our
dependence on NGOs and commercial opera­
tions.

4. AF BiH Aspects Here's the bottom line for the AF BiH. The
ITF international charitable aid to BiH demining efforts,
and is allowing other more successful coun­
tries to take funding precedence. These IC
funding is reduced to

The design now focused on creating a more flexible mili­
tary demining unit with a humanitari­
ian mission at the state level of BiH that can be phased in based on national and international
standards. The design focused on several key
objectives that must be supported. Specifically, the design must

5. Donor Fatigue The general
decline of world economies has caused national charitable aid and donor gov­
ernments to decline from previous years' contributions. One such example is a
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List of the Articles in the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War

Article 1: General provision and scope of application

Article 2: Definitions

Article 3: Clearance, removal or destruction of ERW

Article 4: Recording, retention and transmission of information

Article 5: Other precautions for the protection of the civilian population, of civilians affected by and civilians from the effects of ERW

Article 6: Provisions for the protection of humanitarian missions and organisations from the effects of ERW

Article 7: Assistance with respect to existing ERW Article 8: Cooperation and assistance

Article 9: General preventive measures

Article 10: Consultations of high contracting parties

Article 11: Compliance

Technical Annex: Contains the suggested best practice for achieving the objectives contained in Articles 4, 5 and 9 of this Protocol. High contracting parties will implement this technical annex on a voluntary basis.

Part A: Recording, storage and release of information for UXO and EOD

Part B: Warnings, MRE, marking, fencing and monitoring

Part III: General preventive measures

Nothing is Perfect

The Fifth Protocol is not perfect. Many believe that the language is too conditi­
tional, and these carve outs allow states to del­
iver and rely on the IHL legal­ly on their obligations. Many would have liked the technical annex to be legally binding. Many of the critics are uncomfortable with the approach of the fifth protocol, and if it were to be unilaterally adopted, the technical annex would not. However, as with any document, the final draft is a balanced document and it is a testament to the efforts of the many states who contributed to its creation.

Conclusion

So where do we go from here? Although our focus is to eliminate donor funding in the future, we will be working with the IC and the BMHC to generate donor fund­
ing for the initial equipment costs. We are confident that IC donors will support this ini­
tiative based on the much-improved rate of return for their investment in this future EU number. Over the next few months, the team will be working with the SFOR ABF Re м emoring Working Group to integrate this demining initiative into the future of BF. Based on guidance from the OHR, the new military strategy for BF is to be imple­
m ented by January 2004. The Defence Review Commission is working diligently to resolve any legislative or legal roadblocks for restructuring our mission. If we are successful, the team sees this as the beginning of a new era for coalition military operations. BF is at a cross­
roads in its history where it may be the best suited and most capable country to help coalition countries make this paradigm shift.

References

3. Strictly accepted by BMHC, SOR and industry supporters.
4. Based on interviews with International Community funded (ICF) experts in SFOR.
7. E-mail: richard.weberjr@us.army.mil
9. E-mail: thomas.c.barnett@us.army.mil
10. E-mail: william.k.shaffer@us.army.mil
12. The General Assembly of the United Nations invited elements of the ICRC to design an instrument on ERW in 1998. The ICRC had already prepared an instrument on explosive remnants of war (EPRW). However, the instrument was not adopted by the UN General Assembly and a further ICRC process was initiated.
13. The definition of IEL refers to bombs, grenades, land mines and any other device as defined in Protocol III of the CCW. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure that the use of mines and UXO is reduced. A device is defined as a weapon which is not specifically designed for military use but which may be readily converted for such use.
14. The effect of this would be to reduce the number of states that require a technical annex to be included in the protocol as a legal requirement.
15. Whether the presence of a technical annex is supported by the states that required its incorporation into the protocol will be a matter of debate.
16. The United Kingdom used the 2002 draft to implement the protocol in the United Kingdom. This draft was developed in December 2001 and was formally adopted by the United Kingdom in September 2002.
17. The technical annex has adopted many of the criteria that the mine action community has set for itself in order to achieve the goals of the protocol.
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Published by BMJ Scholarly Commons, 2004