

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL (ZONES 23 & 24) - U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
STATE CONFERENCE:
"ENDING THE TRAGEDY OF LANDMINES THROUGH INNOVATION AND
COOPERATION"**

**SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 - TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2002**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR ROTARY PARTICIPANTS
CONCERNING U.S. LANDMINE POLICY.**

THIS DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED IN JUNE 2002, WHILE A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF U.S. POLICY ON LANDMINES WAS UNDERWAY. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THE REVIEW MIGHT BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO THE CONFERENCE. THE RESULTS OF THE REVIEW MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT AFFECT THE CURRENT U.S. POSITION ON LANDMINES. IF/IF THE POLICY REVIEW IS COMPLETED PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 30, AND IF/IF THAT REVIEW RESULTS IN ANY CHANGES TO CURRENT U.S. LANDMINE POLICY, THE OFFICE OF MINE ACTION INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE WILL ENDEAVOR TO SUPPLY CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS WITH AN UPDATE TO THIS DOCUMENT.

CONTEXT: The United States is committed to eliminating the threat posed by the indiscriminate use of landmines. To that end, the U.S. has been in the forefront of efforts via a key international treaty, the **Amended Mines Protocol to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW)**, to place binding, enforceable legal restrictions on the use of all categories of landmines. The Amended Mines Protocol entered into force in 1998 and was ratified by the U.S. in 1999.

Meanwhile, in 1992 the United States unilaterally banned the export of its anti-personnel landmines.

While the U.S. has not signed the better publicized Mine Ban Treaty (MBT), also known as the Ottawa Convention, the United States remains a world leader in efforts to address the landmine problem.

Currently, the Administration is undertaking a review of U.S. landmine policy. The U.S. is addressing both humanitarian concerns and military requirements, including its responsibility to protect its men and women in uniform, in conducting the review.

The MBT has helped focus global attention on the humanitarian tragedy occurring in mine-affected countries worldwide. The impetus behind the treaty was the danger posed by persistent anti-personnel landmines - - those that remain a hazard long after their intended use during hostilities, in some cases dating back to World War One. There has been a significant reduction worldwide in the numbers of these persistent landmines both prior to and since the MBT was signed, thanks in large part to the efforts of the U.S. and other donor nations, international and non-governmental organizations, and civic groups.

The U.S. believes, however, that the MBT does not adequately consider legitimate U.S. national security requirements nor does it fully address humanitarian concerns. That is why the U.S. continues to work through the CCW's Amended Mines Protocol (Protocol II) and take other concrete steps to reduce the problems posed by landmines.

19 FACTOIDS FOR ROTARIANS AND OTHERS INTERESTED IN LANDMINE ISSUES. INFORMATION IN THESE BULLETS MAY BE SHARED WITH OTHER ROTARIANS WHO WERE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE AND WITH MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA INQUIRING ABOUT ROTARY'S INVOLVEMENT IN HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION:

- The State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs manages the entire spectrum of **mine action**. Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr., the Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs, also serves as the Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State for Mine Action. His Bureau's programs help to accelerate landmine detection and clearance, promote landmine risk education, assist survivors of landmine accidents and encourage research and development of new demining technologies.
- Domestically, the State Department works to raise awareness of the issue and foster public-private partnerships to support mine action. In just three years, State has entered into twenty-eight partnerships.
- Corporations, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic foundations, civic associations, educational institutions and other private groups are among the State Department's mine action partners.
- As part of its extensive outreach effort, the State Department is now forming a network of educators to increase the awareness and participation of students from the upper elementary through university levels in the various aspects of mine action.
- Engaging the private sector is only one of the U.S. components of mine action. The United States' official Humanitarian Demining Program has made the U.S. a world leader in humanitarian mine action. U.S. government agencies involved in the Program are the U.S. Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Agency for International Development and the Centers for Disease Control.
- U.S. bilateral demining assistance - currently to 41 countries - helps these mine-affected countries to remove the threat of landmines to their populations, and in so doing, improve their security. The U.S. has also completed mine action assistance efforts in four other countries.

- **Since 1993, the United States has devoted more than \$600 million to help over 45 mine-affected countries** to fund mine clearance operations, mine risk education, training and equipment, survivors assistance, and research and development into new demining technologies.
- The goal of the United States is to make the world mine safe at the earliest opportunity. **Unlike many government programs, the U.S. Humanitarian Demining Program seeks to work itself out of existence.** As a result, mine affected host nations are expected to take "ownership" of these U.S.-backed programs as soon as possible by providing their own resources in partnership with efforts funded by the international community. **Consequently, a fundamental precept of the U.S. Humanitarian Demining Program is a firm commitment, evidenced by action, on the part of the nations receiving U.S. assistance.**
- Homeland security begins with international security. **Humanitarian mine action contributes to international security.**
- The United States Government works collaboratively with other donor governments, including those that have signed the Mine Ban Treaty, as well as the United Nations, other international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to repair the damage caused by landmines (and unexploded ordnance) around the world.
- For that same reason, the State Department is partnering with Rotary to see what additional expertise, experience and resources can be brought to bear on this important effort to make the world safe from the threat of landmines. ***We're all in this together and partnerships strengthen the common goal of making the world mine safe.***
- Landmine policy is more than the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT) and cannot be boiled down to whether the U.S. does or does not sign it.
- **Currently, U.S. anti-personnel landmine policy is being reviewed. The process is deliberative and inclusive, with the positions and ideas from all parties, including various U.S. Government agencies, major NGOs and key allies, given full consideration.**
- A landmine treaty that *has* been signed by the U.S. is the **Amended Mines Protocol to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW).**
- The U.S. has a demonstrated record of international leadership within the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) to control and contain the harmful effects of the indiscriminate use of landmines. It is currently pressing CCW Parties to adopt strengthened restrictions on the uses of anti-vehicle mines.

- The focus of the Amended Mines Protocol is to establish reasonable standards on the use of landmines in order to minimize risks to noncombatants. Unlike the MBT, the AMP/CCW includes restrictions on anti-tank (or anti-vehicle) mines as well as anti-personnel landmines. It also restricts the use of booby-traps and other devices that the MBT does not address. State parties to the AMP include key landmine producers and users, such as China, South Korea, India and Pakistan that are not parties to the MBT.
- With the exception of those so-called "dumb" (persistent) anti-personnel landmines safely stored for the defense of South Korea or used for training and R&D purposes, **all anti-personnel landmines in the U.S. inventory are of the newer self-destructing/self-deactivating type, ensuring that if they are ever employed, they will not pose a long-term threat.**
- The U.S., sharing a common interest with other nations in the reduction of the grave threat posed by landmines, signed the **International Test and Evaluation Program for Humanitarian Demining (ITEP)** Memorandum of Understanding. As one of the original founding nations of ITEP, the U.S. has helped establish a responsive and sustained global network of test and evaluation capabilities for measuring performance and gauging the effectiveness and suitability of all types of humanitarian demining equipment, systems and methods. This will encourage cooperation for humanitarian demining research, development, test and evaluation, and prevent duplication of effort.
- **The U.S. Government remains committed to humanitarian mine action throughout the world. The U.S. record in humanitarian mine action since the late 1980s and the scope and breadth of its ongoing humanitarian demining program worldwide, to include a dedicated effort to invite participation by citizen-led organizations such as *Rotary International*, are incontrovertible proof of that commitment.**