

Newsweek

education program

Study Guide

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Introduction

Since the mid-19th century, land mines have been an accepted but deadly weapon of war. Long after international and civil battles are over, land mines remain in the ground, ready to kill or maim innocent men, women and children. Land mines cost as little as \$3 to make, but their toll on human, economic and political suffering is incalculable.

According to the U.S. Department of State, an estimated 45 million to 50 million land mines plus unexploded ordnance are currently in the ground in one third of the world's nations. The precise locations of most of these mines, however, are still unknown. They can be laid under roads, paths, fields, schools, cemeteries, bridges or residential areas. The presence or fear of even one land mine can prevent the cultivation of an entire field; stop children from going to school; rob a village of its livelihood; prevent refugees from returning to their homes, and destroy economic and political stability. The problem is most acute in nations that are already ravaged by conflict with little ability or resources to address the problem.

In 1988, the United States and many other nations and organizations began to create solutions to help those countries and people most in need. Mine-action programs were developed to address mine awareness, mine detection, mine clearance and survivor assistance. Today, because of humanitarian mine action, land-mine casualties are declining and the amount of land recovered from mine infestation is steadily increasing. Refugees are returning home, and land-mine survivors are receiving long-term assistance and reclaiming their lives. However, much remains to be done.

These pages and the accompanying map narrate the history, the current situation and the future of the global land-mine problem, as well as the efforts of the people and organizations working to eliminate the threat of land mines. The challenge is great, but with continued commitment by people and governments around the world, a mine-safe world remains possible.

Objectives

"Land Mines: Eliminating the Threat" is designed to:

- ✓ provide information detailing the scope of the land-mine problem and the efforts being undertaken to eradicate it;
- ✓ foster an understanding of the extent to which land mines destroy lives and inhibit economic development in mine-affected lands;
- ✓ raise awareness of the lasting devastating consequences of land mines;
- ✓ illustrate progress made in the effort to rid the world of land mines;
- ✓ encourage discussion and actions that will help to eliminate the threat of land mines.

Materials

- ✓ Wall map;
- ✓ Study Guide with readings and questions for research and discussion.
- ✓ Online teaching activities, which can be found at www.newsweekeducation.com/landmine.

Web Resources

U.S. Department of State, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement

www.state.gov/t/pm/wra

U.S. Department of Defense, Humanitarian Demining Research and Development Program

www.humanitarian-demining.org/

In addition to providing their own information, the following Web sites provide many links to other land-mine activism sites:

United Nations Mine Action Service

www.mineaction.org

Mine Action Information Center

at James Madison University

www.maic.jmu.edu

Social Studies Standards Connections

The information and activities in "Land Mines: Eliminating the Threat" correlate to the following National Council for the Social Studies strands: (2) Time, Continuity and Change; (3) People, Places and Environments; (5) Individuals, Groups and Institutions; (6) Power, Authority and Governance; (8) Science, Technology and Society; (9) Global Connections, and (10) Civic Ideals and Practices.

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Voices of Commitment

The global land-mine issue has many champions around the world. These influential people use their voices so the next generation of world citizens will be able to walk the earth in safety.

Excerpts from Secretary of State Colin Powell's Remarks at Appreciation Dinner for Partners in the Fight Against Land Mines, Nov. 27, 2001:

Since 1993, the United States has provided over \$500 million to support mine-action programs worldwide. These funds, combined with resources from other nations, innovative concepts from the NGO community and thousands of man-years of courageous field work have literally created this new discipline of humanitarian mine action.



Over the past 10 years, the results of our collective efforts have been most impressive. We have seen a decrease in reported annual casualties from 26,000 to approximately 10,000. The rate of reduction is almost 70 percent in Cambodia. That's impressive, but not enough. We have to get the rates down to zero. We have to get the casualty figures down to zero.

Mine-action programs have been established in some 40 countries. About 385 square miles (1,000 square kilometers) of land and over 7,450 miles (12,000 kilometers) of roadway have been cleared,

one square meter at a time. Hundreds of thousands of mine survivors have been fitted with prosthetic devices and given other forms of rehabilitation.

Thanks to ... demining efforts ... parents can send their children out to play, free from the fear that they won't come home ... Entire villages are reclaiming their fields for agriculture ... Survivors of land mine accidents are receiving rehabilitative care and vocational training ... New technologies are being developed that make demining efforts more effective and less dangerous ... Endangered communities are learning how to protect themselves and how to protect their families. Men, women and children in some 70 countries around the world can look to the future once again with hope.

Excerpts from National Press Club Luncheon with Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan, Washington, D.C., March 8, 2001:

Land mines are indiscriminate killers, unable to distinguish between a soldier's heavy boot and a toddler's bare foot. Indeed, some mines are designed in shapes that attract the innocent eyes and hands of children. ... They are often placed in



rural areas explicitly to shatter the morale and integrity of the family, clan, tribe and village. And, cruelest of all, even in long-hoped-for peace, these insidious leftovers are a bitter reminder of past conflict and a threat to future progress.

But even those who never set foot on a mine can be held hostage by these weapons for many years. Imagine a family returning to a village where mines have been sown. Their precious farmland, perhaps handed down through generations, now infested by this evil crop, is useless. They dare not graze livestock, search for firewood, let their children run and play. Even the mere perception of a mine threat is enough to destroy a village's livelihood.

Since 1993, we have cleared the Jordan Valley of over 300,000 mines, to allow those who had tilled the earth many years ago, to cultivate it again, and others to unearth once more our region's precious history. It is my hope that one day we will have a holy land entirely free of land mines and conflict.

I can think of no greater gift to the future than to make a giant step towards peace by rendering safe the steps of everyone on our planet. Now is the time to end the curse of land mines, forever.

Research activity: What do other leaders throughout the world have to say about land mines? Include heads of state, as well as military and civic leaders, in your research.

International Efforts

The international community has responded to the land-mine problem in a number of ways. In addition to making people aware of the presence of land mines, assisting land-mine victims and removing land mines from the ground, two international instruments now restrict or prohibit the use of land mines.

The Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Mines Protocol

In 1980, the United Nations adopted the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), which stipulated that parties to a conflict must always distinguish between civilians and combatants; that civilians must not be targeted for attack, and that the use of weapons that are "of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering" is to be prohibited. In 1996, the CCW was strengthened with amendments that prohibited the use of undetectable antipersonnel land mines (APL); expanded the protocol to include internal conflicts; tightened the regulations related to marking and monitoring antipersonnel minefields; placed the responsibility for maintenance or clearance of land mines with the mine-laying party; and prohibited any APL transfers to countries that were not party to, or failed to apply the provisions of, the protocol. To date, 60 countries have ratified the CCW.

- Prohibits the use of undetectable APL; places restrictions on the use of mines, booby traps and other devices; regulates marking and monitoring minefields; places responsibility for maintaining or clearing minefields to "high contracting parties and parties to a conflict in areas under their control."
- Allows land mines that self-destruct or become inert after a set period of time.
- Includes antivehicle mines in protocol.
- Prohibits the transfer of APL prohibited by the protocol.
- Calls on state parties "in a position to do so" to provide humanitarian mine-action assistance.
- Ratified by 60 countries, including the United States.

The Mine Ban Treaty (MBT)

In October 1992, a number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) met to form an alliance dedicated to the elimination of antipersonnel land mines. At this meeting, the International Campaign to Ban Land mines (ICBL) was born. This organization, which by 1996 represented more than 350 NGOs across the globe, proposed that a conference be held to develop strategies that would prohibit the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of antipersonnel land mines. This set the scene for a conference, held in Canada in October 1996, at which the Canadian government invited all governments to sign a treaty in Ottawa in December 1997, prohibiting the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of antipersonnel land mines. To date, the treaty has been signed by 144 nations and ratified by 122.

- Bans the use, production and stockpiling of all APL, except those required for training.
- Prohibits the use of all APL.
- Does not include antivehicle mines in protocol.
- Prohibits the transfer of all APL except for the purpose of destroying them.
- Calls on state parties "in a position to do so" to provide humanitarian mine-action assistance.
- Ratified by 122 countries. The United States, which has not signed the MBT, currently is reviewing its landmine policy.

Stories of Hope

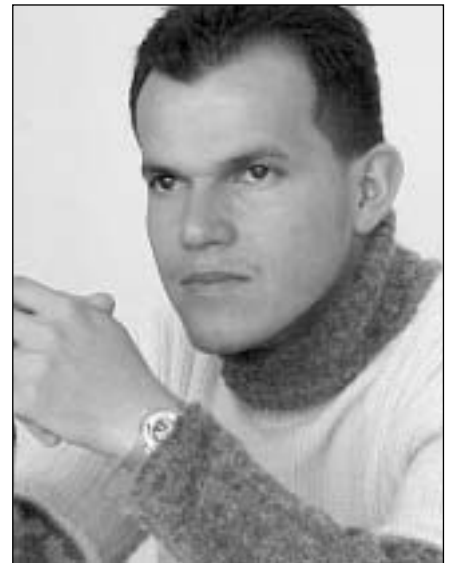
The land-mine story is mostly a story about people. Deminers risk their lives to give land and hope back to the people who need it. Volunteers give their time to educate civilians about the risk of mines. Citizens, communities, civic groups and world leaders donate money and time to make the world mine-safe. Because of humanitarian mine action, children can walk to school; farmers can cultivate their land; refugees can return home, and land-mine survivors can reclaim their lives. On these three pages are some of their stories.

A Survivor:

When Edgar Moreno was 16, he started to work on a cattle farm in Colombia. One day, as he was carrying the milk from freshly milked cows, he stepped on a land mine. His friend, hearing the noise of the explosion, ran to him and took him to the health center. Moreno needed to be taken to a hospital in the nearest city, but guerrilla forces had mined the territory a few days before, including a bridge that connected the town to the city. It took more than 18 hours to get a farmer to take Moreno in a truck. Two days later they arrived at the hospital, and his leg was immediately amputated.

Moreno had a difficult recovery. He experienced a great deal of physical pain and mental anguish, often feeling that death was his best option. But his faith gave him the strength, optimism and hope to face his new reality, although this took some time. When he returned home, he hid himself because he didn't want anyone to see and pity him. His mother and brothers didn't know how to treat the depth of his despair. In addition to Moreno's tragedy, a land mine killed his older brother, as well as a friend who had tried to rescue him.

In 1992, the International Committee of the Red Cross helped Edgar travel to Bogota so that he could enter a rehabilitation pro-



gram at CIREC (Foundation for Reconstructive Surgery). With the help of CIREC, family and friends, Moreno started a music group, studied painting and trained for, competed in and won bicycle competitions. Moreno has married a woman disabled like himself, and they have a baby girl. He helps support his mother as well. Moreno wants to start a small community business in chocolate.

Like thousands of other land-mine survivors, Moreno has reclaimed his life, turning overwhelming physical and emotional pain into hope.

Information for story and photograph courtesy of Landmine Survivors Network

**Research activity: How do other land-mine victims rebuild their lives?
Investigate the options (or lack thereof) available to victims in countries around the world.**

A Minefield:

Phum Thmei is a small village in Cambodia where 179 families make their home. Although the village is just 22 miles (35 kilometers) from the provincial capital of Battambang, the journey can take more than two hours because of poor road conditions, especially when it rains.

The story of Phum Thmei is all too familiar in Cambodia. The area witnessed heavy fighting between Cambodian government troops and the Khmer Rouge over three decades. Conflict became a way of life for the villagers and left a legacy of mines.

Phum Thmei has suffered more than its share of mine accidents. In 1988, there were two deaths, and in 1996, blast mines injured six villagers, each of whom lost at least one leg. In recent years, villagers have also found and defused 11 mines along the main road through the village.

One Phum Thmei minefield was particularly devastating as it included the school, village pagoda and health clinic. In spite of the fact that the badly damaged village pagoda lay in the minefield, villagers and monks continued to visit it each day. So that students could go to class, the villagers cleared a narrow path in the minefield from the main road to the school. As is so often the case in villages throughout Cambodia, villagers used pathways through mined areas even though they knew mines might lie beneath.

This minefield in Phum Thmei was adopted in 2000 as part of the Adopt-a-Minefield program. An initiative of the United Nations Association of the United States, Adopt-a-Minefield raises funds to clear minefields around the world. Community groups and individuals in New Canaan, Conn., raised more



than \$49,500 to clear this field.

With this funding, the Cambodian Mine Action Center began clearance operations in Phum Thmei in February 2001. Two mobile demining platoons of 33 de-miners cleared a total of 50,000 square meters. In March 2001, the deminers found the first APL mine, a type-72A blast mine. In its first month of clearance operations, the demining teams unearthed 40,520 metal fragments. Metal fragments pose a problem for deminers because they slow clearance operations considerably. Every time a fragment triggers a metal detector, the deminer must carefully and thoroughly check the ground to ensure that it is not a mine. Once this process is complete, the deminer must retest his equipment to ensure that it is working properly before resuming his work. It is a tedious, but necessary, task. The minefield was cleared, and the land given back to the people of Phum Thmei, in May 2001.

Information for story and photographs courtesy of Adopt-a-Minefield.

A Nation:

Rwanda emerged from civil war with an estimated 100,000 to 250,000 land mines in its soil. In 1994, two civilian casualties occurred each day as a result of refugees' returning to their homes, fields' being recultivated, uncleared footpaths' being utilized and a generally premature effort to return to normalcy. Immediately after the war ended, it was apparent that land mines were impeding Rwanda's future sustainable economic growth.

The U.S. government helped to establish a National Demining Office in Rwanda to build humanitarian demining capability, mine-awareness training, a computer-based data collection and records-management system and a "train-the-trainer" program. Vital de-mining equipment was adopted and a mine-detection dog program was initiated to complement traditional demining methods. Rwanda has been receiving U.S. humanitarian demining assistance since 1995 with total contributions surpassing \$13 million.

To date, more than 200 U.S.-trained deminers and explosive-ordnance-disposal personnel have cleared more than 2.7 square miles (7 square kilometers) of land, including more than 3,700 miles (6,000 kilometers) of bush roads, and nearly 24,000 mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). Reported land mines and UXO fatalities have dropped from 108 in 1994 to three in 2000, while related injuries have dropped from 128 to four over the same period. Some 400,000 refugees and 200,000 internally displaced persons have returned to their villages, many to houses built on cleared land.

The Rwanda demining program is now in the sustainment phase—the mark of success for a U.S. humanitarian demining program.

Research activity: Pick a country that is NOT shaded green on the "Land Mines: Eliminating the Threat" wall map (and which is not already profiled), and write a profile for that country.

Note the history and the impact of the land mine problem, as well as the progress being made.



The Deminers:

Two decades of war littered Mozambique with an estimated 2 million land mines, contaminating or suspected of contaminating nearly 70 percent of its territory.

In 1994, at the end of the civil war, Colette Josy left his job as a soldier in the Mozambique Army to help free his country and its people from the land-mine problem. As an operations officer, 36-year-old Josy currently oversees a 60-person Mozambique demining operation, funded by the United States. His highly trained team includes manual deminers, dog handlers, mine-detection dogs, medics, drivers, cooks, radio operators and many others. During each long day in the hot sun, the team clears an average of 3,000 to 4,000 square meters of land.

Josy loves his job, mostly because he is giving land back to the Mozambique people. What of the danger? "If the team follows the rules the way we are trained, our team is safe." He is most proud of his contribution to the clearance of the Sena Rail Line in Mozambique. "Now people can go from one place to another safely by train, and goods can get to people." According to Josy, "We are doing a very important job for this country and for other countries, too."

Joshua Jamu is the dog-section supervisor on Josy's team. He began as a dog handler in 1994, with three months of initial training and a one-month period to get acquainted with his first dog, Bad. Dogs and their handlers

typically have a very close relationship. This close relationship is a key ingredient in controlling the dog in the field. "Without control," Joshua says, "It's like driving a car without brakes."

Mine-detection dogs must go through several months of training. They are trained to detect explosive odor signatures or metallic wires found attached to mines and booby traps. Depending on the weather, dogs can work for five to six hours at a time.

Josy's team has a specific process when its members go into virgin territory. Manual deminers first use a metal detector to put a "safe wire" around the area where they suspect the mines to be. They then make 100-square-meter boxes, divided by one-square-meter lanes.

One dog and his handler go up and down a one-meter lane. If the first dog detects nothing, a second dog and his handler repeat the exercise. Only then is the area declared mine-free. If the dog indicates an explosive, a manual deminer uses a prod to further investigate the area. If a mine or UXO is located, a supervisor uses several options to detonate the mine.

Jamu says he is not scared about demining. "Like any other job, if you do it correctly, you are safe. Demining is in my blood."

Since 1992, mine-clearance operations have removed more than 15,000 land mines and 13,000 unexploded ordnance (UXO), and opened about 2,800 miles (4,500 kilometers) of roads.

Tools of Heroes

Today, thousands of deminers are working throughout the world to eradicate land mines. Often called local heroes, deminers are committed to giving land back to the people. Mine detection and clearance is a tedious, dangerous job. Three types of techniques, often used in combination, are part of a deminer's toolbox.

Manual Demining

Description: While demining teams vary in size, each usually consists of highly trained deminers, a team leader, explosive-ordnance-disposal experts, mechanics and paramedics. Once deminers have viewed the area, they sometimes use wands to test for trip wires. They then cut away foliage with shears and pass metal detectors over the soil. If a signal is found, they use a probe to determine the cause. If the signal is caused by a mine or UXO, a team leader normally disposes of it with a small, explosive charge or, in rare cases, disarms it. Manual deminers also work with dog detection teams to initially reduce the size of suspected minefields and to examine those where a dog indicates the presence of a mine.

Advantages: Manual demining, which can be used in almost any terrain, is the most reliable method to locate mines. Deminers have the advantage of human intelligence, can typically work for longer periods each day than dogs and can get into areas that machines cannot.

Disadvantages: Manual demining is slow, hazardous and expensive. Metal detectors may not be able to detect nonmetallic or plastic-encased mines and cannot be used on steel bridges or near railroad tracks. Metal detectors cannot distinguish between mines and other metallic objects.



Mine-Detection Dogs

Description: Mine-detection dogs are trained to find the explosive vapors emitted from land mines and can be taught to find plastics, metals and tripwires. They can be used to make an initial survey to quickly determine if an area is contaminated. They can also be used to assess whether any mines were missed with other technologies. Each mine-detection dog works with a human handler with whom there is a close bond of trust.

Advantages: A dog's olfactory capacity for finding explosives has been proved to be highly effective in many terrains where humans operate. Dogs are environmentally friendly to agricultural land or urban areas. They can detect mines in nonmetallic or plastic casings as well as mines near metal bridges or railroad tracks, where metal detectors are useless. They are easy to transport.

Disadvantages: Some cultures are not accustomed to treating dogs as partners and have difficulty seeing their value. Mine-detection dogs cannot work in certain terrains like swamps, jungles or underwater. They get tired after a four- to six-hour day and can get confused if more than one mine is in proximity.

Mechanically Assisted Demining

Description: Mechanical equipment is used before, after or in combination with other demining technologies. Brush cutters and flails clear thick vegetation to help deminers and/or dogs do their work. Rollers identify the perimeters of mined areas or exert enough pressure to explode some land mines; manual deminers or dogs double-check their work. Loaders scoop contaminated soil and take it to an area where deminers can go through it with metal detectors; this is especially helpful on roads or paths that must be traveled.

Advantages: Mechanical technologies can more speedily verify that an area is clear of land mines, allowing manual deminers to concentrate on contaminated areas.

Disadvantages: Mechanical technologies are expensive and difficult to maintain and transport. They can work only in certain terrains and environments and can disturb and destroy areas where they are used. Humans and/or dogs must follow machinery to ensure that the area is mine-free.



Future Technologies

Existing equipment and techniques make demining slow, dangerous and labor-intensive. Although technology research and development promises to increase vastly the safety and efficiency of demining operations, the most common method still in use today is manual demining.

Improvements in technology will add more varied equipment to the deminer's "toolbox" and are a critical part of timely and efficient humanitarian demining assistance in the future.

Developing new technologies for humanitarian demining presents many challenges. These include the tremendous diversity of environments in which mines are employed; the wide variety of land mines in the ground, and the diversity in culture, training and education of the deminers.

The U.S. Department of Defense Humanitarian Demining Research and Development Program is charged with developing new technologies to increase the safety and efficiency of mine detection and clearance. The program's goals are to provide technology to detect

all land mines; achieve near-100 percent removal; improve operator safety; provide special-purpose hand tools and small power tools optimized for demining, and enhance mechanical vegetation- and mine-clearance systems.

Recently tested technologies include a Thiokol flare, which provides deminers an alternative method for destroying plastic and thin-cased land mines without having to resort to high explosives; a Rotar system for sifting through loose soil to recover land mines and other explosive ordnance; a Camcopter unmanned aerial vehicle that carries a variety of sensors to conduct wide-area detection of land mines, and the Survivable Demining Tractor and Tools to provide deminers with a Swiss Army-knife-like assortment of attachments to clear vegetation.

Since the program's inception, significant progress has been made and many successful products have been deployed for field testing and for the actual detection and elimination of land mines in Asia, Africa, Central America and the Middle East.

The Road Ahead

The estimated 45 million to 50 million land mines plus unexploded ordnance still in place around the world threaten the safety of millions of people and the economic capability and political infrastructure of a third of the world's nations.

Since 1988, the United States and many other nations have contributed more than \$1 billion to mine-action programs.

Additionally, nongovernmental organizations, private corporations, civic groups, educational institutions and individual citizens have contributed time, energy and funds toward solving the land-mine problem.

Thanks to these efforts, the awareness of the danger of land mines has been raised; the casualty rate has decreased; land mines and UXO have been removed; land has been reclaimed; refugees and internally displaced persons have returned to their homes, and assistance has been provided to land-mine survivors and their families. Much has been accomplished.

While the effort to make the world mine-safe is progressing in the right direction, there is still much to be done if this humanitarian tragedy is to be overcome.

Men, women and children in every nation must be able to walk out of their homes without the risk of losing their lives or their limbs; the pace of mine action must be accelerated, and mine-infested countries must be rebuilt. Land-mine solutions must be determined, country by country, with improved surveying capabilities and better technology.

Through continued humanitarian efforts and advanced technology, the land-mine problem can be eliminated, and people around the world can step into a future filled with hope.

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