
FACT SHEET: BANNING ANTI-PERSONNEL LANDMINES

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“Today I am launching an international effort to ban anti-personnel landmines. For decades the world has been struck with horror at the devastation that landmines cause.... To end this carnage, the United States will seek a worldwide agreement as soon as possible to end the use of all anti-personnel landmines.... We must act so that the children of the world can walk without fear on the earth beneath them.”

President Clinton
Washington, D.C., May 16, 1996

People in 64 countries, mostly in the developing world, face a daily threat of being killed or maimed by the estimated 100 million landmines in place today. Anti-personnel landmines (APL) claim more than 25,000 casualties each year, obstruct economic development and keep displaced persons and refugees from returning home. Mines will remain a growing threat to civilian populations for decades unless action is taken now.

NEW U.S. POLICY ANNOUNCED MAY 1996

To address this problem, on May 16, 1996, the President announced a new U.S. APL policy. This initiative sets out a clear path to a global ban on APL but ensures that as the United States pursues a ban, essential U.S. military requirements and commitments to our allies will be protected, as follows:

Global Ban: The United States is aggressively pursuing an international agreement to ban use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel landmines with a view to completing the negotiation as soon as possible. The United States views the security situation on the Korean Peninsula as a unique case and in the negotiation of this agreement will protect our right to use APL there until alternatives become available or the risk of aggression has been removed.

Ban on Non-Self-Destructing APL: Effective one year ago, the United States unilaterally undertook not to use, and to place in inactive stockpile status with intent to demilitarize by the end of 1999, all non-self-destructing APL not needed to (a) train personnel engaged in demining and countermining operations, or (b) defend the United States and its allies from armed aggression across the Korean Demilitarized Zone.

Self-Destructing APL: Until an international agreement takes effect, the United States reserves the option to use self-destructing/self-deactivating APL, subject to the restrictions the United States has accepted in the Convention on Conventional Weapons, in military hostilities to safeguard American lives and hasten the end of fighting.

Annual Report: Beginning in 1999, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will submit an annual report to the President and the Secretary of Defense outlining his assessment of whether there remains a military requirement for the exceptions noted above.

Alternatives to APL: The President directed the Secretary of Defense to undertake a program of research, procurement, and other measures needed to eliminate the requirement for these exceptions and to permit both the United States and our allies to end reliance on APL as soon as possible.

Expanding Demining Efforts: The Department of Defense has undertaken a substantial program to develop improved mine detection and clearing technology and to share this improved technology with the broader international community. The Department of Defense is also significantly expanding its humanitarian demining program to train and assist other countries in developing effective demining programs.

PROGRESS TOWARD THE GLOBAL ELIMINATION OF APL SINCE MAY 1996

In the year since the President announced our new policy, significant progress has been made in a number of areas.

CALL FOR A GLOBAL BAN

On December 10, 1996, in the UN General Assembly, nations voted overwhelmingly (156-0) in favor of the U.S.-initiated resolution urging states to pursue an agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines.

At the opening of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on January 20, 1997 the United States began to work with other member nations to initiate negotiations on a comprehensive, global agreement to ban APL. This 61-member forum in Geneva, Switzerland includes most of the world's strongest landmine ban advocates and most of the world's major APL producers. It is the forum in which the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was negotiated, as well as the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Canada has initiated a process to develop a treaty (banning APL) among like-minded nations. The United States welcomes this process as providing momentum toward a global ban on APL and views it as complementary to negotiations in the CD.

EXPORT MORATORIUM

Since 1992, the United States has observed by law a temporary export moratorium on APL. This law expires in the year 2000.

On January 17, 1997, we announced that the United States will observe a permanent ban on export and transfer of APL. We will work to put this policy into law.

We have encouraged all other nations to join us in a permanent ban on APL export and transfer, to end forever the spread of these weapons. To date, more than 30 nations have joined us in declaring bans and moratoria on their exports.

TIGHTENING APL USE RESTRICTIONS

On January 7, 1997 at the opening of the 105th Congress, the President transmitted to the Senate for advice and consent to ratification the amended Mines Protocol to the 61-nation Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). The United States led the effort to strengthen the Protocol at the May 1996 CCW Review Conference. The Protocol establishes new norms that can protect civilians, even as countries work toward the goal of an APL ban.

The amended Mines Protocol expands the scope of the original Protocol to include internal armed conflicts, where most civilian mine casualties have occurred; requires that all remotely-delivered anti-personnel landmines be equipped with self-destruct and self-deactivation features with a combined reliability rate of 99.9 percent; requires that all non-self-destructing mines only be used within marked and monitored fields; and that all APL be easily detectable, to facilitate mine clearance.

APL STOCKPILES

As the President announced in May, the United States plans to destroy by the end of 1999 about three million non-self-destructing APL. Destruction of these mines is well underway and on schedule (more than 800,000 have been destroyed to date). The United States will retain only those non-self-destructing APL needed for training and for defense in Korea.

On January 17, 1997 the United States announced that we would cap our APL stockpile at the current

level of inventory. We encourage other nations to do so as well.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF APL ALTERNATIVES

As directed by the President, the Department of Defense has begun a Research and Development program to provide effective alternatives to APL. Requested funding for this program is \$3 million in Fiscal Year 1998 and \$5 million in FY 99.

HUMANITARIAN DEMINING PROGRAMS

In FY 1997, the United States will spend about \$28 million in cash and in-kind contributions for demining programs in 14 countries:

Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Laos, Mozambique, Namibia, OAS/IADB regional program in Central America (Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua) and Rwanda.

The United States seeks to establish indigenous, sustainable mine clearance and mine awareness training programs. The FY 98 budget request is about \$35 million for all demining programs.

- The United States has contributed substantially to demining activities in Bosnia, with the goal of ensuring the Bosnians can soon assume responsibility for their own demining program.
- Based on the success of the Superman DC Comic book for children in Bosnia, the United States is working to develop new educational tools such as interactive school programs, as well as radio and TV spots.
- To meet the growing demand for skilled deminers, the Department of Defense has expanded its pool of available trainers to more than 270.

— The Department of Defense has established a humanitarian demining information center at James Madison University (JMU). With DoD, JMU maintains a newly established humanitarian demining website (www.demining.brtrc.com).

NEW HUMANITARIAN DEMINING TECHNOLOGIES

In the last year DoD reviewed over 120 technologies specifically designed for humanitarian demining operations and 21 new projects have been selected for development. Prototypes of selected equipment have been fielded in Bosnia, Honduras, Laos, Cambodia, Mozambique and Rwanda. Program funding is \$14.4 million for FY 97. \$17.7 million is requested for FY 98.

NEXT STEPS

Much work remains:

Gaining early agreement to begin to negotiate a ban on APL in the Conference on Disarmament and enhancing complementarity between work in the Conference on Disarmament and the "Ottawa Process."

Developing alternatives so that the United States can end its reliance on APL as soon as possible.

Obtaining early entry-into-force of the Convention on Conventional Weapons amended Mines Protocol and expanding adherence to the Convention.

Continuing the expansion of humanitarian demining programs.

Developing and fielding new mine detection and clearing technology. ©