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# United States Leadership in Clearing Landmines and Saving Lives

## Fact Sheet

United States Department of State Office of the Spokesman  
Washington, D.C., November 13, 2007

The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the U.S. Department of State's Public-Private Partnership Program to Reinforce Humanitarian Mine Action occurred last month. Next month marks the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the entry into force of Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), the world's first landmine treaty, and to which the United States is a party. Next week the 8th meeting of states parties to an anti-personnel mine ban treaty, commonly known as the Ottawa Convention, will take place. We take this opportunity to reiterate United States landmine policy and actions.

### Policy

The military capabilities provided by landmines remain necessary for the United States to protect its armed forces and ensure the success of their mission. The United States is also committed to eliminating the humanitarian risks posed by all landmines - both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle. It stands with those who seek to protect innocent civilians from these weapons. However, the United States has not signed the Ottawa Convention because it fails to balance legitimate military requirements with humanitarian concerns.

### Actions

In 1992 the United States banned the export of its anti-personnel mines. In 1999 it removed its last minefield, which protected its base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and ratified Amended Protocol II. In 2004 the United States committed to never employ a "persistent" (long-lived) landmine after 2010, relying instead only on short-duration, self-destructing/self-deactivating mines that cease to be a threat within hours or days after combat. In 2005, the United States banned the use of non-detectable mines, both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle, surpassing the requirements of both landmine treaties. In 2006, the United States, joined by 24 other states, issued a declaration at the Third Review Conference of the CCW, committing each government to make anti-vehicle mines used outside of perimeter-marked areas detectable, not to use such mines outside a perimeter-marked area if they are not self-destructing or self-neutralizing, to prevent the transfer of such mines that do not meet these criteria, and then only to transfer such mines to states accepting this policy.

Since 1993, the United States has spent over \$1.2 billion dollars in nearly 50 mine-affected countries and regions for: clearance of mines and explosive remnants of war (most of which are of foreign origin); mine risk education; survivors assistance; landmine surveys; research and development on better ways to detect and clear mines; training foreign deminers and mine action managers; and destroying at-risk stocks of arms and munitions. Thanks in part to United States' help, the annual landmine casualty rate has dropped from over 26,000 four years ago to around 5,000 today, and Costa Rica, Djibouti, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Kosovo, Macedonia, Namibia, and Suriname have achieved mine "impact-free" status. Nicaragua should follow suit in 2008. Learn more about United States mine action at [www.state.gov/t/pm/wra](http://www.state.gov/t/pm/wra), [www.humanitarian-demining.org/](http://www.humanitarian-demining.org/), and [www.ussaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/the\\_funds/lwvf/](http://www.ussaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/the_funds/lwvf/). For an overview of this global issue, visit the Mine Action Information Center at: <http://maic.jmu.edu/>.