

# campaign

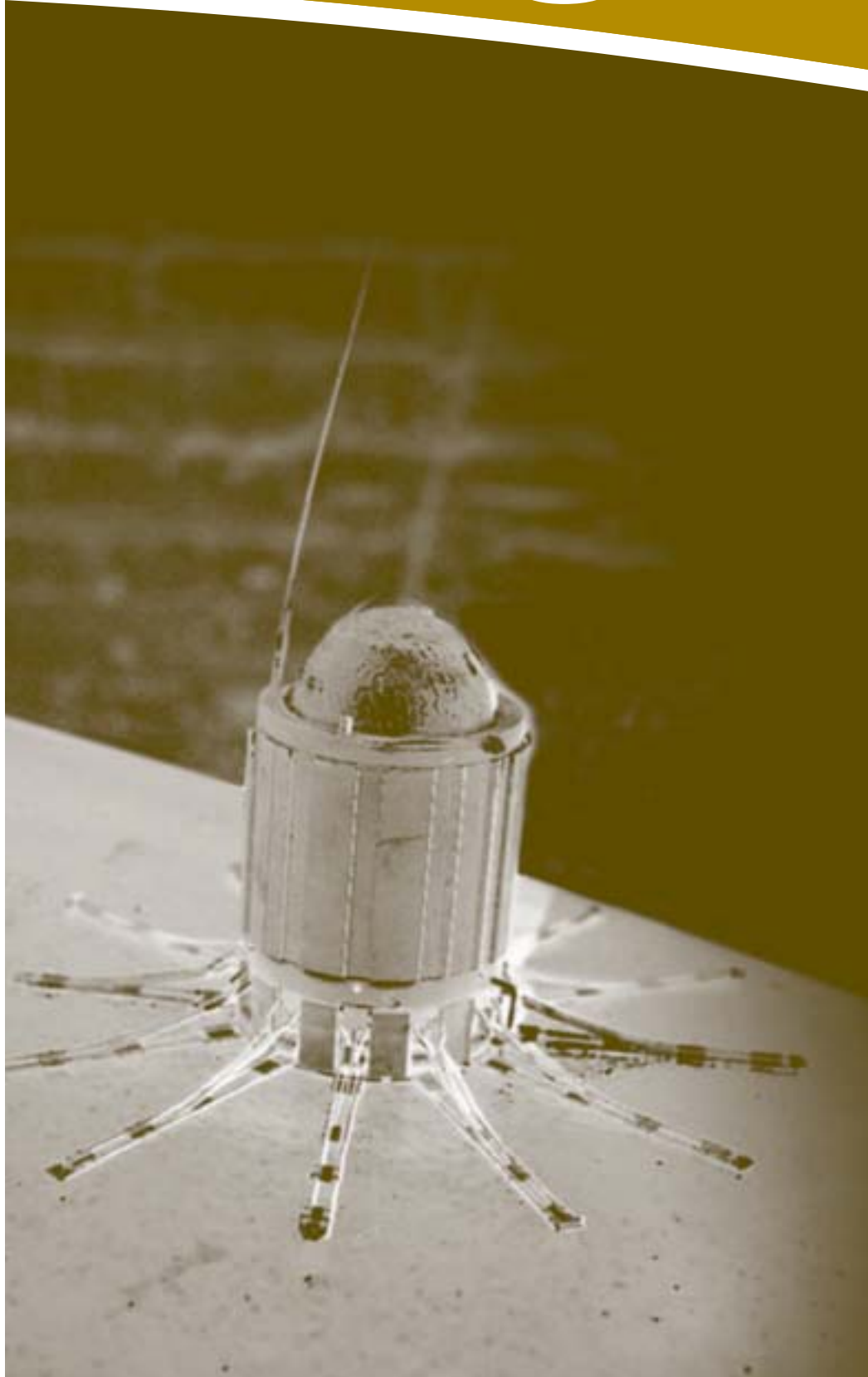
## Alternative anti-personnel mines: the next generations

As the number of countries joining the ban on anti-personnel mines slowly rises, Landmine Action has been investigating the weapons being stockpiled and invented to replace those banned. It seems that Governments, the military and manufacturers have not learned from the problems with landmines. They are stockpiling and quietly developing alternative mines that may be inhumane, dangerous and, in some cases, potentially as lethal as the weapons they are supposed to replace.

As most of this work is happening in secret, there is a complete lack of public awareness of the potential problems. Yet this is not futuristic, space age weaponry – some of these systems will be ready for action within the next couple of years, others are already in use. Read about the new generations of landmine in this issue of Campaign.

## In this issue

- 2 News
- 4 **A worse fate still to come?**  
Steve Wright reports on 'alternative' anti-personnel mines
- 6 Country profile: Nicaragua
- 7 Civilian footsteps
- 8 Landmine Action Week



The AT2 landmine, still in UK stocks. The Italian Government concluded in 1997 that it is sensitive enough to be detonated by a person, and ordered all stocks to be destroyed.

**Also in this issue: can you help us in Landmine Action Week?**

## Cluster bombs campaign update: explosive remnants of war



Children listen to lessons about the dangers of cluster bombs, Kosovo, July 2001  
Photo: John Rodsted/Landmine Action

Landmine Action continues to campaign hard for new international humanitarian law requiring the users of cluster munitions to take responsibility for clearing them. As well as cluster bombs, other unexploded ordnance, or UXO, threatens the lives and livelihoods of people after conflicts are over, often having the same impact as landmines.

The International Committee of the Red Cross have proposed a new protocol to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) which would include the following measures on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW): a post-conflict clearance obligation on users; a requirement for the provision of information on the locations, dangers, detection and render safe procedures of

unexploded munitions; and a requirement for warnings and information to be given to civilians. There is also a proposal for measures specifically addressing the impact of cluster munitions during a conflict as well as post-conflict.

These proposals look likely to be discussed at a UN Conference in December.

Thank you to the many supporters who have sent in copies of MPs' replies to your letters – please keep them coming! Landmine Action is now also taking the campaign to Brussels, where MEPs will shortly debate the problem of cluster bombs.

### **Please write to your MEP, asking them**

- to raise concern about the humanitarian problems caused by cluster bombs and UXO with the European Commission, and urging Commissioners to act.
- to support new international law obliging users of cluster bombs to clear unexploded bomblets.
- to support a freeze on the use, manufacture, sale and export of cluster bombs until new international law restricting the use of these weapons is introduced.

**To locate your MEP and obtain their contact details, visit [http://www.europarl.org.uk/uk\\_meps/MembersMain.htm](http://www.europarl.org.uk/uk_meps/MembersMain.htm) and click on the region where you live. Or telephone the UK office of the European Parliament on 020 7227 4300.**

## Campaign dismayed by hints that the Bush administration may retreat on US landmines policy

The United States Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL) is alarmed by indications that the Bush Administration may be poised to reverse current US landmine policy. A presidential directive from 1998 supports conditional US ratification of the international treaty banning anti-personnel landmines in 2006. But reports indicate that the Bush Administration may move to retain this weapon in the US arsenal, and reject the 1997 Ottawa landmine Treaty signed by 140 nations and ratified by 118.

"White House support for this weapon would put the US out of step with all of its NATO allies, undermine our national security, and disregard landmines' grotesque effect on civilian lives and limbs," said Gina Coplon-Newfield, Co-ordinator of the US Campaign. The USCBL is a coalition of more than 500 religious, veteran, humanitarian, medical, human rights and other groups.

Recent news stories cite correspondence to Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA) from Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs Paul V. Kelly, which states: "...In the context of the Administration's on-going policy review, we must also examine the need for landmines on the battlefields of the future."

Challenging the Administration to send the treaty to the Senate for ratification, eight retired senior officers from the US armed forces recently sent a letter to President Bush supporting the treaty for both national security and humanitarian reasons.

The former military leaders, including a former commander of US forces in Korea, Lt. Gen. James Hollingsworth, said: "Anti-personnel landmines are outmoded weapons that have, time and again, proved to be a liability to our own troops. We believe that the military, diplomatic, and humanitarian advantages of speedy US accession far outweigh the minimal military utility of these weapons."

## Government reverses 'cut' to mine clearance funding

The International Development Secretary, Clare Short MP, announced plans to cut UK funding for mine action by 20 per cent, but restored the cut after intensive lobbying by Landmine Action.

At an All-Party meeting in the House of Commons on 7 March, the Secretary of State praised the "superb" UK mine clearance charities. However, officials outlined plans to channel all the remaining funds for this work through two UN agencies instead of UK charities – which means that around 15 per cent of the cash will go on administration before a penny reaches mine-affected countries.

In response to calls for a re-think, Clare Short wrote to All-Party Landmine Eradication Group chair, Frank Cook MP, to announce that funding "for the time being" will now be kept at around £10 million a year.

Landmine Action remains seriously concerned that this money may still simply be handed over to the UN, threatening much-needed mine clearance projects in several countries which the Department for International Development has supported for some years. The campaign has called on the Government to re-think this idea as well.

# Somme battle site dedicated to Landmine Action



People gathered at the Lochnagar Crater to mark the 85th anniversary of The Battle of the Somme. Photo: Gary Purkiss/Landmine Action

The Battle of the Somme, begun on 1 July 1916, was the biggest battle ever fought by the British Army. In preparation for the 'Big Push', sappers dug for weeks through the chalk before packing the tunnels with explosives. The biggest of 17 mines laid for the start of the Battle was named Lochnagar by the Tyneside Scottish Brigade, who were positioned in the trenches west of the village of La Boisselle.

The Lochnagar mine's 24 tons of explosives were detonated at 7.28am on 1 July.

A pilot flying overhead, 2nd Lieutenant C. A. Lewis, said: "The whole earth heaved and flashed, a tremendous and magnificent column rose up into the sky. There was an ear-splitting roar, drowning all the guns... The earth column rose higher and higher to almost 4,000 feet. There it hung, or seemed to hang, for a moment in the air, like the silhouette of some great cypress tree, then fell away in a widening cone of dust and debris."

Dozens of German soldiers were killed in the explosion, and many more on both sides fought and died around and in the crater made by the mine. The crater, 90 feet deep and 300 feet across, is an awe-inspiring sight.

To preserve the crater, Richard Dunning from Surrey bought the site in 1978. An estimated 400,000 people visit it each year. Along with a group of

250 volunteers, known as the Friends of Lochnagar, Richard maintains the crater and holds a simple but moving ceremony every year at the exact time the mine was detonated.

About 1,500 English, French and German people went to this year's ceremony, including relatives of men who died there. Wreaths were laid and the Somme Battlefield pipe band played. Finally, school children scattered poppy petals into the crater; 350,000 petals in total, one for each Somme casualty.

The Friends of Lochnagar have kindly dedicated the site to Landmine Action, as a memorial to all victims of landmines. Long-time supporter Lord Deedes laid a wreath on behalf of the campaign at this year's ceremony.

● For more information about the Lochnagar Memorial, visit [www.friendsoflochnagar.co.uk](http://www.friendsoflochnagar.co.uk)

## Posthumous medal for Mines Advisory Group Technical Advisor

The Queen presented the Queen's Gallantry Medal to the family of Mines Advisory Group (MAG) employee Christopher Howes at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace on 1 May. Chris was murdered by the Khmer Rouge, along with his interpreter Houn Hourth, whilst working on mine clearance in Cambodia.

In March 1996, Chris's mine clearance team was taken hostage by the Khmer Rouge at its minefield work site in north-west Cambodia. The MAG staff were force-marched into the jungle, where the Khmer Rouge intended to hold them for ransom. Chris was instructed to leave his colleagues behind, but refused. His decision to remain was to cost him his life.

While the team was eventually released several hours after their abduction, Christopher and Houn Hourth were taken further into the jungle. Chris refused to abandon Houn. They were subsequently murdered and it was not until 1999 that their remains were discovered and formally identified.

In recognition of Christopher's devotion to duty, and his courageous insistence that he stay with his team, Christopher has been posthumously awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal. MAG Executive Director, Lou McGrath, said: "MAG is proud to hear of the award that has been made to Christopher Howes – an award that reflects upon Christopher's dedication to his staff and the supreme sacrifice he was required to make. Chris's contribution remains alive in Cambodia – the men he trained and managed are still with us today, helping their country: Chris's spirit lives on. Our thoughts are with his family at this proud – yet sad – time."

## Diana Memorial Fund exhibition at Althorp

The problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance, and the work of Landmine Action, features strongly in a new exhibition opened in June at Althorp House in Nottinghamshire. The new exhibition gives an insight to the Fund which was established four years ago as a living memorial to Diana, Princess of Wales. It is designed to complement the existing exhibition at Althorp which

celebrates the life of the late Princess.

Andrew Purkis, Chief Executive of the Memorial Fund, said: "Every year thousands of visitors come to Althorp to remember Diana, Princess of Wales. We are delighted to be able to show them how, through the Memorial Fund, her humanitarian inspiration continues to help change lives."

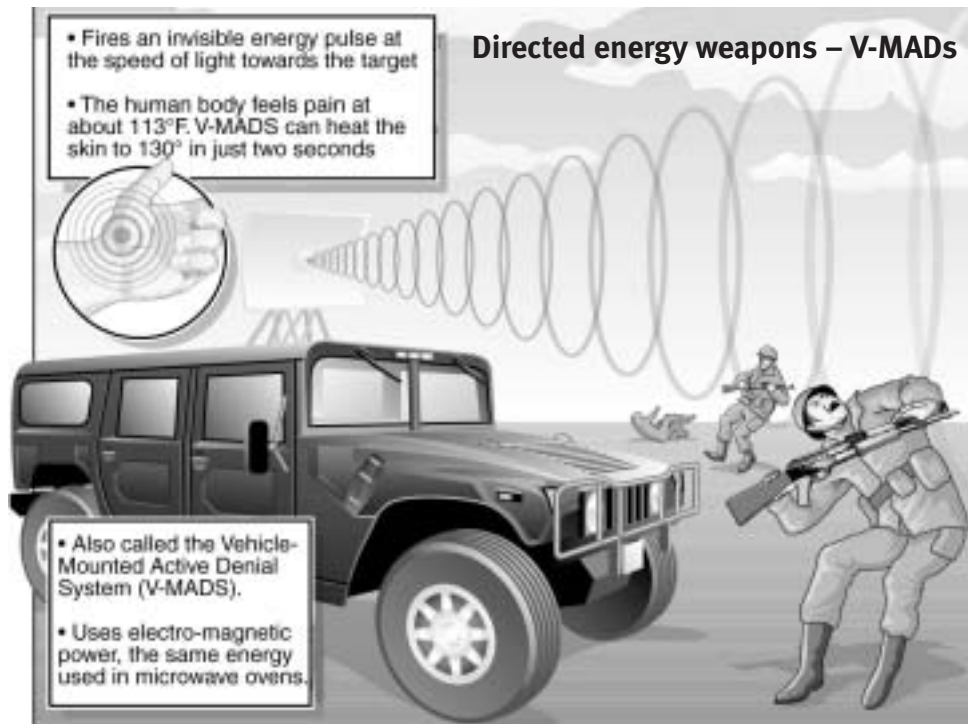
**Anti-personnel landmines are banned by the Ottawa Treaty. But the next steps may be even more shocking. By Steve Wright**

In the movies, Jaws was the hidden horror that would rip your legs off and turn your insides into offal. In reality, such a fate is most likely to be delivered by a man made anti-personnel land mine, ostensibly banned by the Ottawa Convention, but still maiming and killing an estimated 25,000 people a year.

A new report by Landmine Action reveals that Nato governments are investing in mine-like technologies, some of which are specifically designed to get around the landmine ban. They include anti-vehicle mines with anti-handling devices or sensitive fuses like the German AT-2, which can be detonated by someone stumbling across it or even by the proximity of someone wearing a wrist watch. The Italian government destroyed its entire stock of AT-2 mines in 1997. But the UK's Ministry of Defence holds an estimated 100,000 in stock. On the horizon however, is a new generation of victim-activated technologies that look and operate nothing like "traditional" mines.

They include so-called "self-healing" minefields developed by Sandia Laboratories in the US. These mines have ultrasonic sensors and a piston-driven foot, enabling them to hop 30 feet in the air. Equipped with primitive neural network systems, such "intelligent" mines are able to detect the distance to neighbouring mines, sense when some are missing and leap around until the pattern is virtually re-established.

Other victim-seeking lethal technologies identified by the report include "off-the-shelf" systems such as the automated, camera-mounted, concealed machine guns produced by the US company Autauga Arms; the French Ruggieri DIPS area-denial system, which consists of a multiple grenade launcher, capable of firing a variety of disorientating chemical and wounding ammunition; or the dart-firing Robart, of the Rand Corporations Arroyo Urban Operations team.



# A worse fate

Already on the horizon are formidable autonomous systems based on the Australian company Metal Storm's variable-lethality enforcement guns, which can fire ammunition electronically without mechanical triggers, in salvos at a rate of 90,000 rounds per minute. A sensor-activated, 100-barrel multiple mortar targeting system has been devised by Metal Storm with \$A450,000 (£190,000) assistance from the Australian government to produce a sensor-activated "landmine replacement".

The search for alternative landmines has become intensely commercial with the US government initiating a three-track approach to enable it to sign the Ottawa Treaty in 2006. Track three, which is concerned with finding alternative operational concepts (which include "precision-guided munitions, autonomous robotic systems, combat identification systems and improvements to direct and indirect fire systems") has been allocated \$228 million. Some of these will involve getting around Ottawa's provisions by leaving no ordnance in

the ground. Instead a virtual minefield has been created, based on satellite surveillance and computer-held maps, which can unleash mortar or missile fire against anyone or thing that crosses the threshold of any of the virtual mines.

A key area in the public relations quest for humane mines is in the work

*"These mines have ultrasonic sensors and a piston-driven foot, enabling them to hop 30 feet in the air. Equipped with primitive neural network systems, such "intelligent" mines are able to detect the distance to neighbouring mines, sense when some are missing and leap around until the pattern is virtually re-established"*

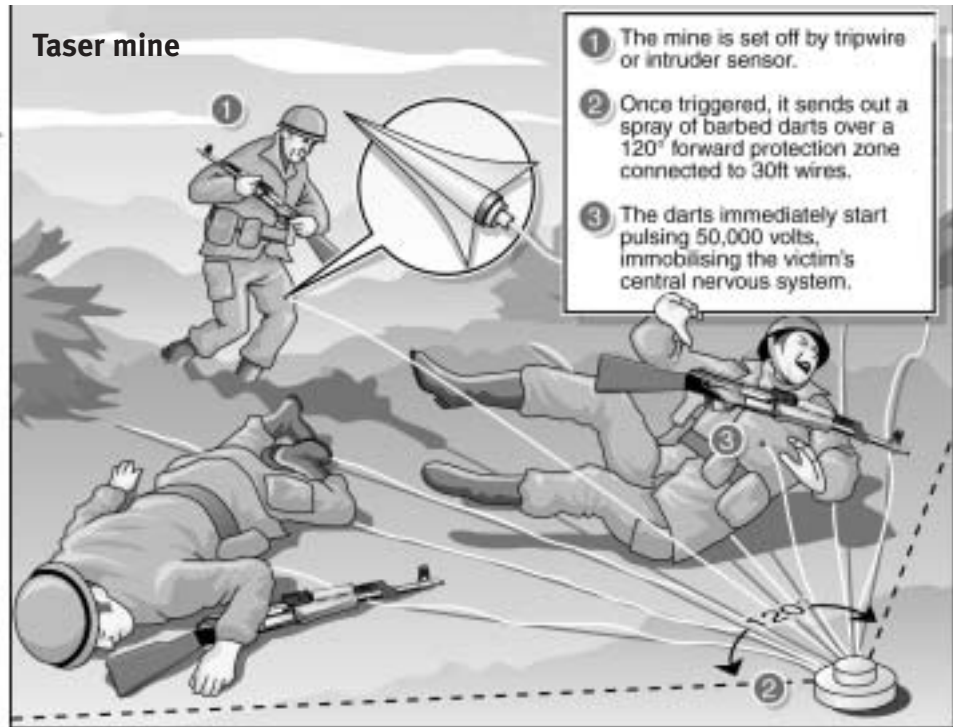
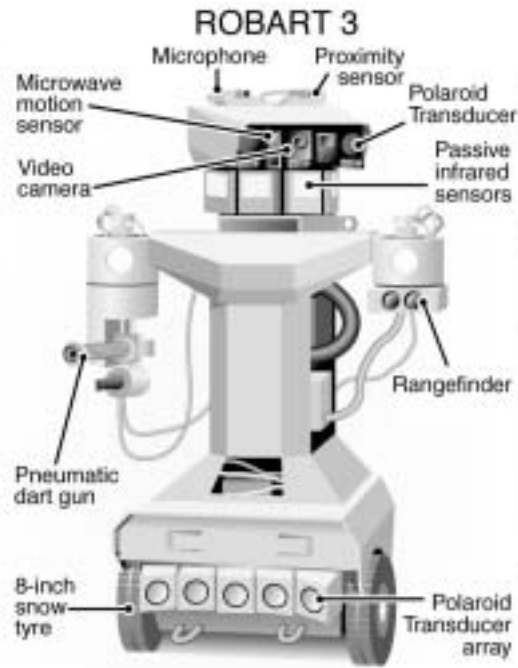


Illustration: The Daily Express

# still to come?

undertaken for the US joint non-lethal weapons programme. The report describes variants of the Claymore mine using rubber balls. There are also tranquillising chemicals (derivatives of the fentanyl family – some such as carfentanyl are extremely toxic) and anxiety-causing drugs with a variety of delivery mechanisms; entanglements including bounding net mines; pre-encapsulated malodorous smells such as faeces, rotting meat, skunk and body odour. There are also directed energy weapons. Some use the microwave part of the electromagnetic spectrum. These are seen as offering a “tunable” response as so-called “progressive penalty munitions”.

With reputations and big contracts at stake, some of these sci-fi alternatives have, like Star Wars, promised more than they can deliver. Programmes such as nets fired from canisters have been dropped – sometimes because they were lethal in practice, other times because the science didn’t add up.

Systems most likely to find favour are ones using tested technology and

these include the taser landmine based on high voltage electroshock devices manufactured by the US companies Tasertron and Primex Aerospace. Once the device lands, it is immediately capable of victim activation by a trip device and a variety of other sensors.

When activated, barbed darts are fired in a 120-degree multi-directional pattern, reaching out between 15 and 30 feet. Then 50,000 volts are pulsed through the target, sufficient to paralyse through an inch of clothing. Four darts are fired at different angles to get anyone crouching to avoid a mid-torso strike. Tasertron claims that “the electronic pulse will temporarily incapacitate anyone within an inch of the darts by overriding the brain’s signal to near-surface motor control nerves, causing uncontrollable spasms of the subject’s motor control functions. The subject will fall and be temporarily incapacitated. The subject remains conscious and alert but cannot control his muscles. A timing circuit will permit keeping the subject

incapacitated until they can be taken into custody by nearby troops.”

Not surprisingly, Landmine Action member Amnesty International is calling for a suspension of all trade in taser devices as part of their “stamp out torture” campaign, because electroshock devices have become the universal tool of the torturer. It would be ironic if a version capable of industrialising the practice becomes part of the landscape of modern warfare.

The Government of the United States is now conducting a new review of its policy on anti-personnel mines, which is being co-ordinated by the National Security Council. President George W. Bush is also due to decide on the status of the US alternative anti-personnel mine programme. The odds are that he will agree to unleash this arsenal on future generations.

● **Alternative anti-personnel mines – the next generations** is published by Landmine Action. Steve Wright is director of the Omega Foundation. This article first appeared in the Science Guardian.

# Nicaragua

**The legacy of the 1980s conflict affects 37 per cent of the Nicaraguan population who still live in fear of landmines and other unexploded ordnance (UXO), more than a decade after peace accords were signed.**

After the 1979 Revolution, the ruling Sandinista party was embroiled in a dirty civil war against the Contras, a rebel group covertly funded by the US government. Between 1982 and 1989 more than 130,000 mines were laid throughout the country, both anti-personnel and anti-tank mines. The Sandinistas used Soviet, Czech, and Cuban-made mines, while the Contras planted US Claymore landmines.

Thirty-five of the country's 143 municipalities are mine-affected. The Government has estimated there is one mine for every 34 Nicaraguan children. The Nicaraguan Red Cross estimates that around 50 people are injured by mines a year; 90 per cent



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Locating suspected minefields has been difficult: some dated maps exist but don't cover all areas or account for mines laid by the Contras. As a result, many areas continue to be an everyday danger for Nicaraguans. The situation worsened in 1998 with Hurricane Mitch, whose floods and mudslides relocated around 75,000 mines, according to Handicap International.

In total, 224 km of the country's borders are thought to be mined. The majority of mines were laid along the northern border with Honduras, where the Coco River acts as a natural boundary. Mines are only part of the problem in this area, inhabited by Miskito Indians. Grenades, mortars and rockets have also been found. This UXO threatens the lives of the local communities, and their livestock, so development is severely hampered in an area of economic importance for the whole of the country.

The number of mine victims has decreased significantly over the past few years, thanks to prevention work and the installation of warning signs by the

Nicaraguan Army, Red Cross and other NGOs. The Nicaraguan Army has been carrying out mine clearance, reporting to a National Commission for Demining set up in 1993. They report destroying 65,000 mines in 640 different sites during demining operations between 1993 and April 2001, with more than two million square metres of land cleared. The UK partly funds the demining programme in Nicaragua through the Organisation of American States (OAS).

But NGOs, both national and international, warn that more resources are needed for mine action, including clearance, awareness and victim assistance. There is no centralised source of information on landmine casualties and many accidents in rural areas a long way from the capital, Managua, go unrecorded. Rehabilitation programmes are also minimal in outlying areas although there are plans to build a permanent unit in the northern region where most victims live.

The Government has made progress towards destroying its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines. In 1999 the Nicaraguan Army had 135,000 mines stockpiled. Forty per cent of these have now been destroyed. The aim is to complete stockpile destruction by April next year, if sufficient funding can be obtained.

In September 2001 Nicaragua will be the focus of the landmine issue when it hosts the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Treaty. The state has shown a strong commitment to the banning of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines, ratifying the Treaty in May 1999, as well as holding the First Central American Meeting on Demining in 1999. It's an appropriate choice for this important meeting between member states.

#### Sources:

Landmine Monitor Report 2000  
[www.icbl.org](http://www.icbl.org)  
[www.oneworld.net](http://www.oneworld.net)  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)  
[www.summit-americas.org](http://www.summit-americas.org)



Landmine Action member Motivation works with local organisations to provide wheelchairs for Nicaraguan amputees. Photo: David Constantine, Motivation

# Civilian footsteps: Can a person on foot detonate an anti-tank mine?

The 1997 Ottawa Convention bans the use, development, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel mines. Unfortunately, distinctions between mines designed to kill or injure people and mines labelled anti-tank or anti-vehicle are not always clear.

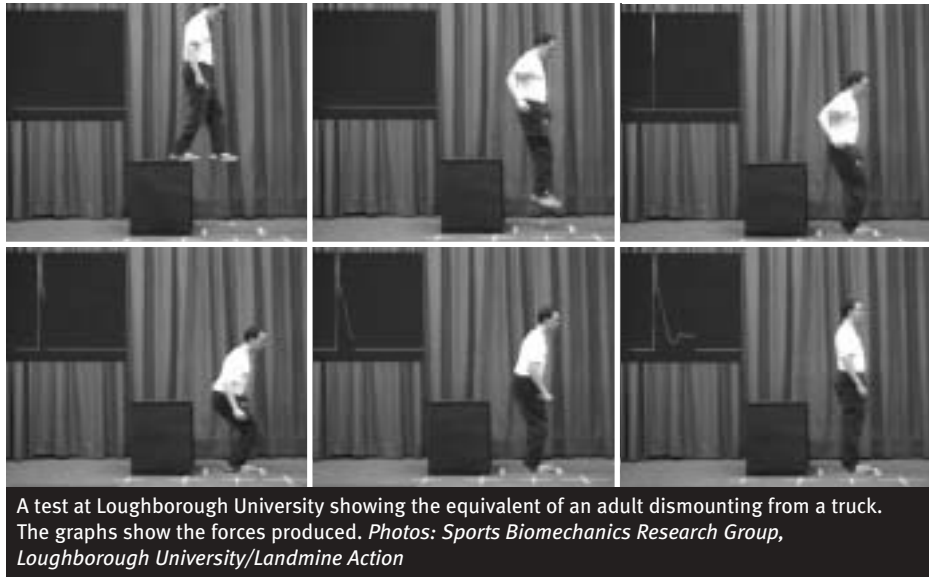
In March 2001 a meeting of international experts was convened by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva to discuss anti-vehicle mines (AVM). Attention was focused during those meetings on a minimum initiation pressure (pressure required for a mine to be detonated). Landmine Action has previously identified a number of anti-vehicle mines that require pressures of between 2.2 kg and 100 kg.

Some experts favoured a prescriptive approach, suggesting that a minimum pressure be imposed by international convention to avoid any threat to non-combatants, while others argued that this could encourage the wide-scale manufacture of AVMs capable of initiation at the lowest legal pressure as the norm. One suggestion, favoured by a number of delegates, was for a minimum pressure of 150 kg.

Landmine Action considered this to be a matter of some concern because



A British-made Mark 7 anti-tank mine; 150-275 kg of pressure will cause it to explode. This mine is found in many countries including Afghanistan, Angola, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, Namibia, Somalia and Zambia.



A test at Loughborough University showing the equivalent of an adult dismounting from a truck. The graphs show the forces produced. Photos: Sports Biomechanics Research Group, Loughborough University/Landmine Action

there appears to be a lack of objective evidence to show that 150 kg is a 'safe' minimum pressure. So we commissioned the Sports Biomechanics Research Group at Loughborough University to conduct a series of independent experiments designed to measure the forces exerted by humans while engaged in a range of activities common to communities worldwide.

## Research findings

The experiments found that a person, dropping from a height equivalent to dismounting from the rear deck of a cargo truck, can exert a ground force many times in excess of his or her own bodyweight. For example, an adult weighing 70 kg can easily apply pressure equivalent to 210 kg and more. The peak force produced by an adult in the tests was the equivalent of 1,000 kg. But perhaps of more concern is the fact that a child can quite easily, while skipping for instance, exert downward forces in excess of a common AVM initiation pressure of 150 kg.

For example a child weighing less than 40 kg can produce forces in excess of 450 kg by dropping from a height of less than half a metre, the equivalent of jumping from a garden

wall or out of the back of a light goods vehicle.

## Landmine Action wants governments to:

- transparently review the initiation thresholds of all anti-vehicle mines in existing stocks and in development, reporting this promptly under the existing Treaty reporting framework. As part of such reviews, governments should provide convincing technical and field information, making it available to independent observers such as specialist non-governmental organisations, that demonstrates anti-vehicle mines are not capable of being initiated by the forces exerted by civilians on foot.
- give due consideration to the findings of this research in efforts to determine 'safe' pressure thresholds.

We also believe that there is a need for wider and more comprehensive studies of the vulnerability of non-combatants to anti-vehicle mines during military operations and in post-conflict environments.

● For more information on this study, email [research@landmineaction.org](mailto:research@landmineaction.org) or phone the office on 020 7820 0222.

# Landmine Action Week

## 5–11 November: Danger UXO!

"I went with my cousins to see the place where NATO bombed. As we walked I saw something yellow – someone told us it was a cluster bomb. We began talking about taking the bomb to play with and then I just put it somewhere and it exploded. The boy near me died and I was thrown a metre in the air. The boy who died was 14 – he had his head cut off. I was near him and another boy tried to help me."

This is the story of a 13-year old boy in Pristina Hospital, having undergone a double leg amputation. Up to now, public attention has been focused on the horrific problems caused by landmines. But there are many other types of explosive weapons which, when they fail to detonate as intended or are simply left behind after a conflict, can – like mines – endanger innocent civilians and prevent people using their land.



Explosive remnants of war, including landmines, threaten civilians in Bosnia for years after they ceased to serve any military purpose. Photo: John Rodsted/Landmine Action

That's why this year's Landmine Action Week, 5–11 November, is focusing on cluster bombs and other explosive remnants of war.

Landmine Action believes that cluster bombs are a particular problem, and is calling for a global freeze on the manufacture and use of cluster bombs pending new international humanitarian law to deal with their effects.

But we are also calling for the UK government to take the lead on new international legislation that would make the users of all explosive munitions fully accountable and responsible for clearing them up after the fighting is over.



Take part in Landmine Action Week to help victims of mines and UXO.

Photo: John Rodsted/Landmine Action

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

**Landmine Action Week** provides the perfect opportunity for you to get involved. Landmine Action will be asking people to send a postcard to their local MP, encouraging them to support the campaign. We can provide you with details of other local campaigning activities that you can join.

We'll also be raising money for the clearance of unexploded ordnance, and for help for victims.

Alternatively, why not organise your own event and invite all your friends along? How about:

- Organising a sponsored workout at your local gym;
- Having a dinner party where you charge your friends for the privilege of your superb cooking

(alternatively, you could get them to pay you not to cook!);

- Holding a coffee morning at your local church hall or school. Landmine Action can provide speakers for a limited number of talks on landmines and UXO.

If you're in need of inspiration, look no further than the **Landmine Action Week campaigning pack**, which is full of suggestions for raising awareness and money. To order a pack, just use the enclosed response form or email [info@landmineaction.org](mailto:info@landmineaction.org)

And don't forget to let us know what you are up to! In particular, we would really appreciate photos of your event so that we can include them in later editions of Campaign.

Thank you!

**landmine action**  
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Landmine Action consists of the following co-operating organisations:

ActionAid • Action for Southern Africa • Action on Disability and Development • Adopt-a-Minefield (UK) • Afghanaid • Amnesty International UK • CAFOD • Cambodia Trust • Campaign Against Arms Trade • Child Advocacy International • Christian Aid • Comic Relief • Concern Worldwide • Disability Awareness in Action • Environmental Investigation Agency • Global Witness • Handicap International (UK) • Hope for Children • Human Rights Watch • International Alert • Jaipur Limb Campaign • Jesuit Refugee Service • MEDACT • Medical & Scientific Aid for Vietnam Laos & Cambodia • Medical Educational Trust • Merlin • Mines Advisory Group • Motivation • Mozambique Angola Committee • Omega Foundation • One World Action • Oxfam GB • Pax Christi • Peace Pledge Union • People and Planet • POWER • Quaker Peace & Service • Refugee Council • Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health • Saferworld • Save the Children UK • Soroptimist International UK Programme Action Committee • Tearfund • United Nations Association • United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) UK • VERTIC • War Child • War on Want • Welsh Centre for International Affairs • Women's International League for Peace & Freedom • World Vision UK

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THE WORK CONTINUES