

Phnom Penh Post

April 25, 1995

Dear Harry,

Thank you for your letter of April 4. I gave a copy of it to a friend of mine, Ron Podlaski, and I encouraged him to write you directly.

Ron is a former Vietnam Veteran who came here three years ago to help set up a prosthetic's center for disabled Cambodians. He has now moved on to set up a private business where he owns a boat and takes tourists out on the Mekong for relaxing cruises. All his staff on the boat are amputees.

Ron has my utmost admiration for the work he is doing and has won many awards in the U.S. for his service here in Cambodia. Simply put, he is a man of great integrity and determination to heal the "wounds of war."

(over)

If you can do anything to help him out,
I have absolute confidence that your
support would go a long way to getting
Cambodia back on its feet - both
literally and economically.

Sincerely,

Michael Hayes

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657-2345

HARRY SILVER

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ENTERPRISES

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April 4, 1995

Phnom Penh Post
Michael Hayes Publisher
House #10A Street 264
Phnom Penh Cambodia

Dear Mike,

We met at the Cambodian Hotel where you spoke to a tourist group primarily of Harvard Alumni. This trip to Cambodia was very interesting and impressive however as I had mentioned during the question and answer period that Cambodia is a "basket case". I felt that there is a possibly a way to help in some small way.

We had taken home the copy of your Phnom Penh Post that you distributed at the above meeting. It changed many of my opinions from our four day stay in Cambodia. The big picture on the government to government work is beyond our capabilities but I believe in a small way there may be ways to help some of the extremely poor and handicapped.

The Rotary International Monthly had an article the past issue on land mines and dwelt on Cambodia's problem. If we could follow up on this it may be possible to get a project or two set up to help the Cambodian people in some way. This monthly magazine is distributed to most Rotary members, 1,100,000 of them via 25,000 clubs worldwide. Rotary also has a foundation that matches funds for charitable projects that may be tapped. The easiest way to start is if there is a Rotary club in Cambodia.

Our tourist group, as many others, consist of people that can be expected to spend \$100 to \$1000 per person if a market is set up to capitalize on this. From your past article in 1994, 175,000 tourists visited Cambodia with a 50% increase from 1993. Projecting this rate, a million tourists by 2000 is easily reachable. This means that the tourist spending should be about a billion dollars or about the percent of gross income.

We found very little to buy as a tourist. The hawkers at each of the shrines sell mostly picture post cards and T-shirts. Since both of these products are probably manufactured and printed in Thailand, HK or Japan, the benefit to Cambodia is minimal. There were a few items that could be bought with

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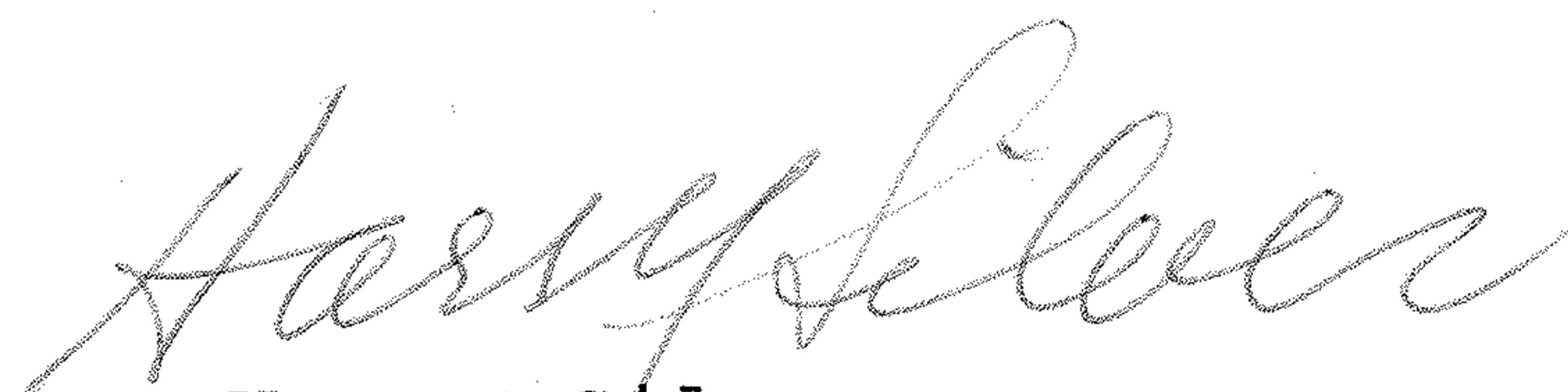
difficulty in the local market but should be expanded many times with some planning and training such as wood crafts made of local woods. One tree from the rain forest could provide work for 1000 people per year if training was provided. Jewelry made primarily of silver wire Filigree work could supply at least 1000 workers wages continuously.

The simplest method of capitalization on the tourist business is to copy the techniques of Bali artisans even Vietnam had a larger variety and more products made locally.

As an American, you could appreciate setting up gift shops at the exit or vicinity of the shrines, temples and hotels. Most important, the American and European tourists would prefer to pay double for a product if they could see it made especially if the handicapped were trained to work in the stores and show off their wares.

Mike, I could go on and on but if I could hear from you as to whether there is any merit in the above, possibly a direction you think we could take to help.

Yours,



Harry Silver
Evelyn Silver

The Land-Mine Crisis: A HUMANITARIAN DISASTER



UN PHOTO BY P.S. SUDHAKARAN

by Boutros Boutros-Ghali

Like a deadly disease long absent and assumed conquered, the land mine, that scourge of the battlefield of World War I, has reemerged on a scale unimagined and with hideous, unanticipated effects. There is today a global land-mine crisis. And while it began as a military problem, it is now an ongoing humanitarian disaster.

The United Nations estimates that, in the course of

"Mine" signs such as this are posted in uncleared areas throughout the country by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

recent civil and international strife, more than 100 million mines have been laid in 62 countries. These mines have been placed not only in combat zones, but also in areas of purely civilian and commercial activity, thus bringing terror to large populations. In the hinterlands and countrysides of the world, the legless, blinded, ravaged bodies of the living are an increasingly common sight. They are condemned to a

future of marginal social and economic existence and place an impossible burden on nations striving for development. Mines have been planted around key economic installations, including electric plants and power lines, water treatment plants, road networks, market centers, and port facilities. By neutralizing essential infrastructure, mines present a virtually insuperable obstacle to post-conflict peace-building.

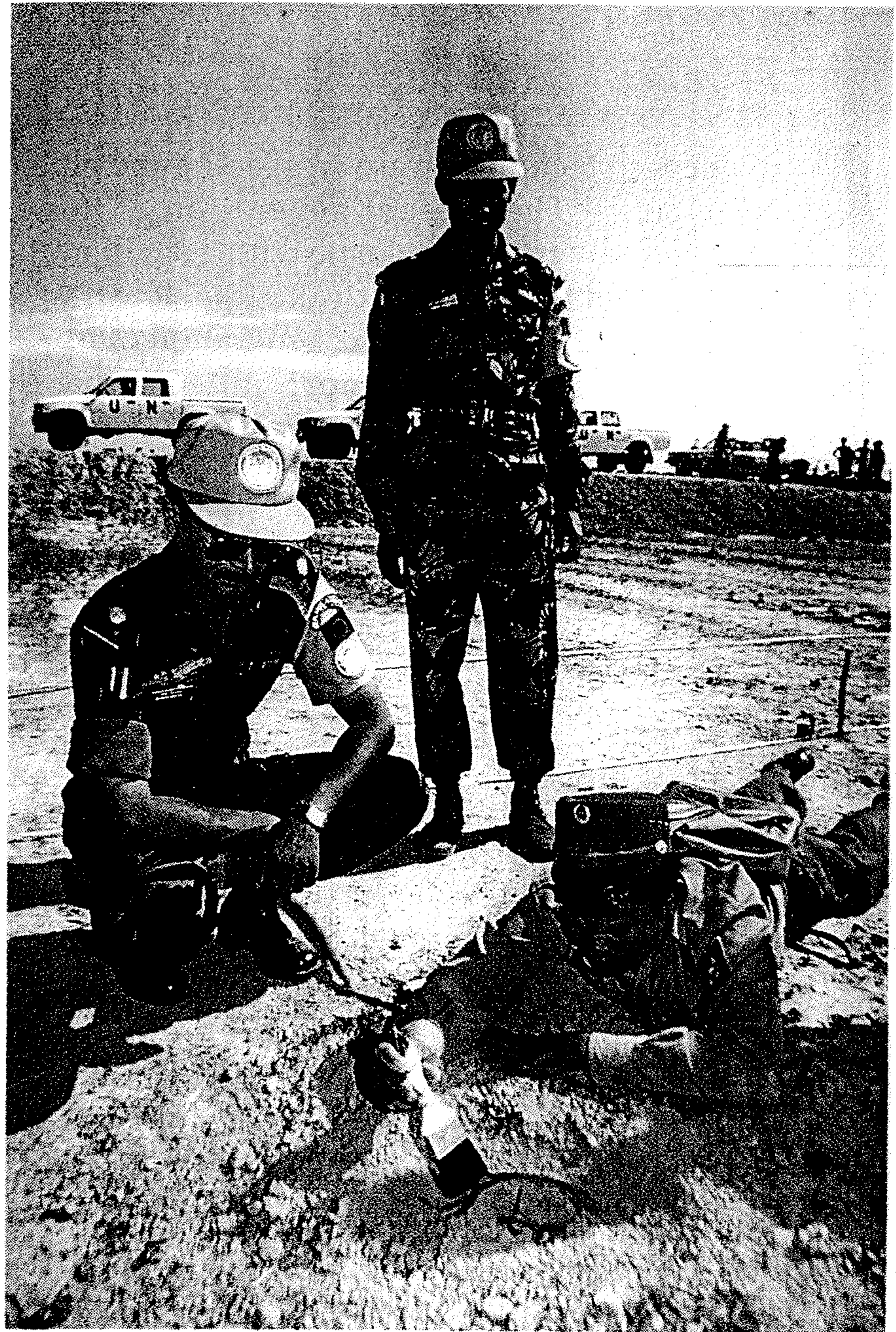
People continue to use land that they may or may not know is mined because they must cultivate their fields, fetch water, collect firewood, or need a place for their children to play. Elsewhere, vast tracts of potentially productive land have been turned into no-man's-lands by extensive mining. Most of the nearly 20 million refugees in the world today want to return home, but United Nations assistance for repatriation and the repopulation of former war zones is impeded by the problem of uncleared mines. When farmers cannot survive by working the land, they gather in cities and large towns where work is scarce and housing is poor.

Twelve years of arguably the worst conflict since World War II ended in Cambodia [in 1994]. With the war over and UN-brokered elections completed, the new government of Cambodia can start to rebuild its society after the traumas of the killing fields. But the war is not over for everyone in Cambodia. Almost every day, scores of people—farmers, travelers, aid workers, and soldiers—are killed and more are maimed as mines continue to perform their dreaded function. Sadly, red signs warning of mines must be posted on trees only a few feet from the highly traveled road to Angkor Wat, one of humanity's greatest cultural treasures. Cambodia's problem is not unique. Every day, mines and unexploded ordnance destroy and damage human life indiscriminately. After the troops withdraw, land mines remain in the ground as brutal reminders that successful peace-building and development are still beyond the horizon.



UN PHOTO 159532 BY J. BLEIBTREU

Victims of El Salvador's 12-year civil war patiently await their turns at the Salvadoran army barracks in Santa Ana, where prosthetic limbs donated by a California, U.S.A.-based church group are distributed.



UN PHOTO 159491 BY J. BLEIBTREU

UNTAC peacekeepers from Bangladesh teach a Cambodian army soldier how to deactivate land mines.

THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

A U.S. government report estimates that the worldwide total of deployed land mines increases by 500,000 to one million each year. Of the four categories of antipersonnel mines (blast, fragmentation, directional, and bounding devices), the blast mine is most common. Blast mines are usually hidden underground and designed to activate when the victim steps on the mine. Detonation drives fragments of the mine, along with dirt, gravel, footwear, and surrounding vegetation, up the victim's legs and body. When not instantly deadly, blast mines almost always obliterate limbs or result in surgical amputation. Secondary injuries to the face and other parts of the body invariably occur.

The effect on individuals is psychologically devastating; the demand on a poor nation's health, welfare, and social system is overwhelming. Amputation or blindness usually means the end of a peasant's working life. For many, the cost of a prosthesis is prohibitive. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, a prosthesis should be replaced every six months for a child and every three to five years for an adult. Thus a 10-year-old child with a life expectancy of 50 to 60 years will require about 25 prostheses. At a cost of U.S. \$125 each, the victim will need approximately \$3,125 for artificial limbs in his or her lifetime.

Advances in technology are worsening the global mine crisis. The present generation of mines are generally made of plastic with a small metal component, which makes them difficult to detect with metal-searching devices. The next generation of mines may be entirely plastic and almost undetectable by current methods. Most mines today use simple mechanical fuses, but mines already are available that contain sophisticated electronic fuses that make them far more hazardous to find and remove.

Mine clearance technology, in contrast, has advanced little since the 1940s. New techniques are badly needed. To date, relatively little money has been spent on mine clearance research; much more has been spent on the military act of breaching minefields. Humanitarian mine clearance is not a military mission, and armed forces trained in breaching techniques rather than area clearance generally lack the necessary expertise. No nation has developed proper equipment for humanitarian mine clearance, and current military equipment is poorly suited for that purpose. Some research has been undertaken by private companies, but until governments of developed nations become fully involved, new techniques will not be developed and humanitarian mine clearance will remain a slow and dangerous process.

Clearing mines means working by hand, with one specialist wielding a metal detector and another on his knees probing the ground with a stick. Current detection equipment is just 60 to 90 percent effective in finding mines made with a minimum of metal. Yet in humanitarian mine clearance, the objective is to remove every mine in a minefield; success requires a clearance rate over 99 percent and preferably over 99.9 percent. Clearing mines is made even more hazardous by booby traps set to foil those efforts.

Even locating mines is difficult. Few armies make adequate minefield maps; soldiers often lack the skills to do so. Maps can also quickly become obsolete and dangerously inaccurate in fluid battle situations, because minefields may be altered by warring factions. Frequently, no attempt is made to map, record, or mark the minefields—to the subsequent hazard of the local population.

A SLOW AND COSTLY EFFORT

Primary responsibility for demining must lie with the country affected. The United Nations' chief objective is building indigenous capacity to clear mines. Experience shows that the most cost-effective clearance teams are those comprised of civilian mine clearers recruited locally and trained for the task in their own country.

The United Nations funds many of the mine clearance programs around the world. The two prerequisites for UN assistance are consent by national authorities and security for UN personnel when re-

moving mines in militarily sensitive areas. Within the United Nations, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has been assigned to coordinate mine clearance, working closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The United Nations takes three general approaches to demining: as part of integrated humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, as part of purely humanitarian operations, and as part of post-conflict peace-building.

In Afghanistan, for example, about 2,000 mine clearers have been trained and deployed under UN management in a program that must continue for several more years. This program costs about \$12 million per year. Mine clearance could be doubled using existing management and training resources, but donor funding cannot be found to support the increase. In Cambodia, about 1,400 mine clearers are deployed. More have been trained, but donor nations have not been able to supply the supervisory staff required while Cambodian managers and supervisors gain experience. In Mozambique, about 300 mine clearers are deployed in a UN program overseen by a Norwegian nongovernmental organization. A major road clearance project is now in progress. The UN demining headquarters in Mozambique also coordinates all non-UN mine clearance in the country. In Somalia, the mine clearance program is based entirely on local companies. Three contracts are under way, with the possibility of more if those are successful. Mine clearance has unified the clans in more than one location and could become one of the United Nations' major humanitarian contributions to the Somali people. The United Nations carries out smaller mine clearance programs in Kurdistan and has plans for programs in Rwanda, Liberia, and Angola.

The cost of clearance, including training, support, and logistics, is estimated at between \$300 and \$1,000 per mine. Most antipersonnel mines cost less than \$25, and some cost less than three dollars. Mine clearance is expensive because it is labor-intensive, and slow because it is dangerous. In Kuwait, where as many as seven million mines were laid during the Gulf War, 84 demining experts have been killed or injured. At least 30 people have died in UN demining operations in Afghanistan. In Cambodia and Mozambique, mines are now overgrown by long grass, every blade of which has to be removed individually to prevent pulling tripwires. In Rwanda, mines will probably be found in tea plantations; every bush will have to be dismantled branch by branch to prevent tripwire-operated mines from detonating.

Clearance costs include management, training, casualty evacuation, insurance, and compensation. In some instances, mine clearance has been attempted without any of these. In northern Somalia, for example, a local team of 49 mine clearers lost 17 members to accidents. And there may be additional costs

associated with demining. In areas of recurrent strife, roads must be paved so that cleared mines will not be replaced with others laid beneath the surface of dirt roads.

In countries where there is no ongoing peacekeeping operation, a trust fund is often set up to finance mine clearing programs. This system is usually slow and unable to keep pace with demand for mine clearing. I have thus asked for the support of member states in creating a United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Mine Clearance. The fund would provide resources for initiating mine clearance at the crucial early stage after a conflict when people return to the land and when, in the absence of information and technical capacity, mines wreak the greatest havoc.

POLITICS AND DEMINING

Economic support for mine clearance operations must be coupled with strong political and legal advocacy to fight the global mine crisis. Protocol II to the 1980 conventional weapons convention entitled "Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps, and Other Devices" specifically regulates the use of land mines. At present, 41 states have ratified the convention, which entered into force in 1983. But the land mines protocol, which originally sought common ground between general humanitarian principles and the military view of mines as an effective weapon, has shortcomings that must be addressed.

The land mines protocol is not applicable to internal warfare and does not regulate the production, stockpiling, transfer, or export of antipersonnel mines. The conventional weapons convention also does not include any provisions for enforcement. There is no procedure to monitor compliance and no designated venue for lodging allegations of breaches. There is no method for seeking redress or cessation of unlawful acts and no penalty for the intentional or indiscriminate use of mines against civilians. Even if mines are laid according to wartime rules, the protocol fails to take into account the delayed impact of mines after a war ends.

Under Article 8 of the conventional weapons convention, a review conference may be convened 10 years after the convention's ratification; preparations have begun for such a conference to be held in 1995. This conference must address the shifting role of mines from a tactical battlefield weapon to a theater-wide weapon of mass civilian destruction. Most important, efforts must be made at the conference to strengthen the conventional weapons convention and the land mines protocol by adding strong enforcement provisions. Such provisions would include mandatory registration with the United Nations of the number and type of land mines produced and held, mandatory reports to the United Nations on any transfer of land

mines, obligatory agreement to permit appropriate inspections to determine compliance, and appropriate sanctions for noncompliance. . . .

Strengthening the conventional weapons convention and the land mines protocol enacting export bans, and working to put mines in the same legal and ethical category as chemical and biological weapons are all critical for solving the global mine crisis, but ultimately, and urgently, the world needs to establish an international convention on mines. Its purpose should be to reach agreement on a total ban on the production, stockpiling, trade, and use of mines and their components

The proliferation of mines has created a triple crisis: individuals are the victims of inhumane weapons; developing nations are unable to go forward with economic and social programs; and families, localities, and nations are compelled to bear an increasingly heavy medical and social burden. The United Nations has taken the lead in demining efforts worldwide through programs of direct clearance, technical assistance, mobilizing public opinion, and aiding victims. Increased funding and stronger political support for this UN effort are now urgently needed. ☉

• *Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a former educator and diplomat in Egypt, is Secretary General of the United Nations. This article is reprinted by permission of Foreign Affairs, September/October 1994. Copyright 1994 by the Council on Foreign Relations, Inc.*



A mine victim and his child in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.