

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

In 1980 the United Nations (UN) concluded a "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects", also known as the Certain Conventional Weapons or CCW Convention. The CCW convention and its three Protocols restrict or prohibit the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to cause undue suffering or have indiscriminate effects, especially on civilians. One of the protocols of the CCW convention restricts the use of anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines, remotely delivered mines, boobytraps and other devices.

Canada has ratified the 1980 CCW convention. The United Nations are currently engaged in negotiations to review and amend the 1980 CCW convention, which is likely to place further restrictions on the use of landmines. Canada, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) is deeply involved in the United Nations initiative to review and amend the 1980 CCW convention.

The Department of National Defence (DND), because of the military nature of the convention and the potential impact of a revised convention on Canadian Forces activities and doctrine, is a major participant in the Canadian delegation. One of the most likely outcomes of the revision of the convention is that, in the future, all landmines will require relatively sophisticated fuses which will cause the mines to self destruct or self neutralize after a specified time. There is also a possibility of a provision incorporated in the revised convention which will require that all landmines have a passive self deactivation device, which will act as a fail safe backup to the self destruct or self neutralizing device. This will minimize potential danger to innocent civilians in the minefield areas.

Canada currently has no self destruct or self neutralizing landmines in its military inventory. In order to assess the implications for Canada on the various options being presented at the revision to the United Nations Convention, DND contracted SNC Industrial Technologies (SNCIT) a consultant study to investigate the technological and cost implications of retrofitting existing landmines without self destruct or self