

Peru-Ecuador border clearance moves to Phase 2

Canada, with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United States, conducted a mine action exploratory mission to Ecuador and Peru in mid-August 1999.

The goal of the mission was to identify the financial and human resource needs of the Ecuadorians and Peruvians as they enter Phase 2 of demining efforts in their border area and to learn more about the countries' priorities and plans of action.

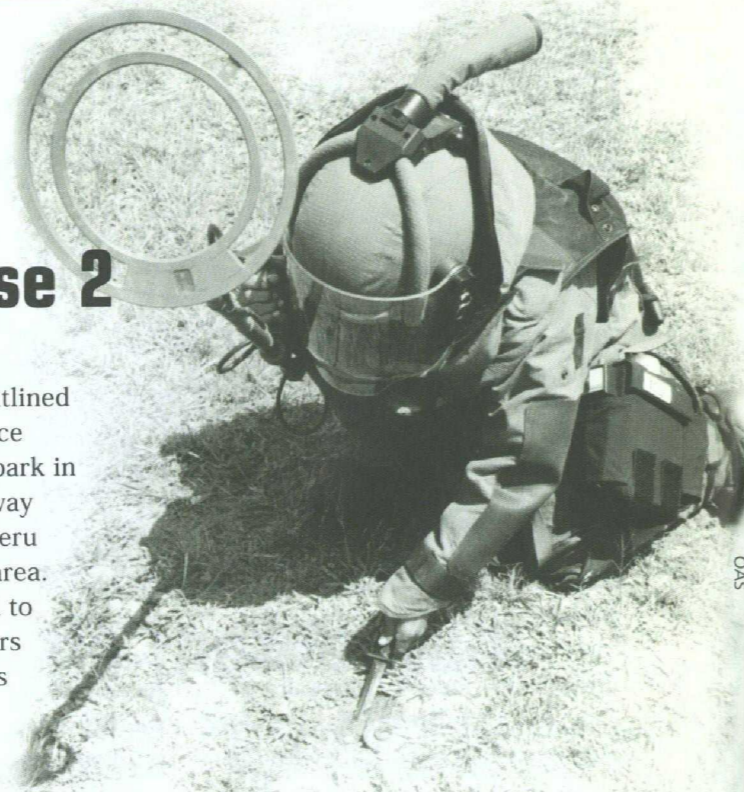
The Peru-Ecuador peace accord, signed Oct. 25, 1998 in the aftermath of their 1995 border conflict, was the first peace treaty in the history of the Western hemisphere to include mine action as one of its terms.

Phase 1 of demining – the demarcation of the Peru-Ecuador border – was carried out from January to April 1999. The area's dense jungle terrain, laden with landmines from border conflicts spanning the second half of this century, made mine clearance onerous. Demining teams had to be flown in and lowered directly on to the ground where they were to work.

Under these conditions, Peru and Ecuador identified demining equipment and shared mine clearance expertise as key to a safer, more efficient operation.

In September, Phase 2 of mine clearance efforts began in the border area of Tiwinza, the priority

area for demining outlined in the countries' peace accords. A national park in Ecuador and a highway linking the park to Peru are planned for the area. Phase 2 is scheduled to be finished in 10 years under the obligations of the Ottawa Convention which Peru and Ecuador have signed and ratified. To date, Canada has contributed a total of \$400,000 for demining in Peru and Ecuador.



Deminer at work on Peru-Ecuador border wears Canadian supplied Med-Eng protective gear.

Zagreb provides regional focus for mine action

Croatia was one of the first nations of southern Europe to sign and ratify the Ottawa Convention. Since then, international attention has been slow to focus on the serious mine problem plaguing the country, and to recognise the steps taken by its government, with the United Nations, to address the situation. The Zagreb Regional Conference on Mine Action held June from 28 to 30, provided a forum for discussion of mine action and the implications of the Ottawa Convention in the region. The conference was successful in bringing together NGOs, governments and international organizations from countries such as Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine,

Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It gave participants a valuable opportunity to exchange experiences of managing the mine problem in the region and implementing the Convention, particularly commitments for mine clearance and stockpile destruction.

The conference also provided insights into how Croatia is dealing with its landmine problem. The Croatia Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) is responsible for setting priorities, maintaining a database of mine incidents, mapping cleared land and mined areas, quality assurance of mine clearance and donor coordination. Since a law was passed in March 1998 governing mine clearance operations and restricting activities largely to

Progress report: Ukraine stockpile destruction

Important groundwork has been laid for the destruction of the roughly 9.6 million stockpiled landmines in Ukraine.

In keeping with the Memorandum on Mutually Beneficial Cooperation between Canada and Ukraine signed on January 28, 1999, Canada and Ukraine are in the process of choosing a company to destroy the stockpiles and drafting the contract to begin work. Environmental assessment and financial and technical verification mechanisms are also being structured.

These stages should be completed in the coming months so

that stockpile destruction can begin within the next year. The program is being designed to destroy all stockpiles in four years in compliance with the time frames specified in the Ottawa Convention.

To facilitate development of the stockpile destruction program, a Canadian delegation, headed by Advisor to the Ambassador for Mine Action Lt.-Gen.(retired) Gordon Reay, visited Kyiv, Ukraine from July 19 to 23 for meetings with representatives of the Ukrainian Ministry of Industrial Policy, Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Since then, Canada has been

involved in consultations with other donor countries and organizations such as NATO to seek additional resources for the destruction program. In late October, Lt.-Gen. Reay gave a presentation on the Ukraine program to NATO in Brussels, with the intention of setting up a form of joint cooperation and/or NATO investment in the stockpile destruction.

Both Ukraine and Canada will be attending the up-coming Interessional Standing Committee of Experts Meeting on Stockpile Destruction in Geneva, December 9-10. Ukraine will be one of the cases examined by the international community at those meetings.

The Zagreb Regional Conference on Mine Action opened with the destruction of 3434 anti-personnel mines marking the beginning of Croatia's fulfilment of Article 4 of the Ottawa Convention.

commercial companies, much of the mine clearance is being done by both international and Croatian commercial firms.

CROMAC is an indigenously-run mine action centre, responsive to priorities identified by local communities and open to new technologies and methods of operation in implementing its national mine action plans. Though it is almost completely nationalized, CROMAC is supported by two teams of international advisors, one group from the Western European Union and the other from the UN's Mine Action Assistance Program.

