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The Humpty Dumpty Institute Forges Innovative Public-Private Partnerships for Landmine Clearance in the Caucasus



The Humpty Dumpty Institute (HDI) is a New York-based, non-profit organization dedicated to establishing effective and innovative public-private partnerships to ameliorate the global landmine crisis. The Institute has ongoing partnerships with a variety of public and private organizations. Together, these partnerships have raised over \$1.5 million (U.S.) for landmine detection and clearance operations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Mozambique, Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Eritrea. To date, HDI's programs have focused on clearance and subsequent economic re-development in partnership with the U.S. State Department (DOS), the International Trust Fund (ITF), the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), the Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI), the New York Wine and Grape Foundation (NYWGF), SkyLink Aviation, the One Sri Lanka Foundation, HALO Trust, the Armenian National Mine Action Center, and the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA).

by Daniela Kempf, Mine Action Program Officer, HDI and William J. Rouhana, Jr., Co-Founder and Co-Chair, HDI

About HDI

Established in 1998, HDI is a home for "venture philanthropists" and business leaders who are interested in foreign policy issues. HDI puts its private sector experience to work in the public sector by turning good ideas into operational programs and by providing its partners with creative content, intellectual capacity, critical venture capital and marketing expertise.

"While our name is intended to be humorous and memorable, our mission is very serious—we try to put the pieces back together," notes Ralph L. Cwerman, President of HDI.

"Our comparative advantage is our ability to identify common interests among governments, corporations and engaged citizens to address cutting-edge

issues and form meaningful partnerships." It is through these partnerships that the Institute has managed to leverage more than \$1.5 million for landmine clearance programs in six countries.

As a result of the Institute's work in the area of landmine clearance and awareness, the U.S. DOS applauded HDI's decision to launch a new initiative—the National Mine Action Group (NMAG). NMAG organizes a wide network of corporate executives, foundation directors, private entrepreneurs and other parties interested in supporting worthy projects to eliminate landmines. NMAG looks at seed funding and possible areas of collaboration for programs addressing landmine clearance, mine victim assistance, research and development of new demining technologies, and mine awareness in mine-affected countries.

In Sri Lanka, for example, HDI's landmine action program focuses on clearing high-priority minefields scattered across the Jaffna Peninsula and the Vanni. HDI has partnered with the One Sri Lanka Foundation to raise funds for HALO Trust mine-clearance operations in the field; \$60,000 has already been raised to fund one demining team for 12 months. Additional funding is planned for the future.

HDI has also sponsored three mine detection dog (MDD) teams—in Lebanon, Eritrea and just recently in Armenia—in partnership with the MLI and a number of other organizations. Each team costs

about \$400,000 to purchase, train, transport and sustain over a four to six year period. HDI's dog teams in Lebanon and Eritrea, operating since 2002, recently reached a milestone—the dog teams have now covered over 160,000 sq m of land.

Another example of a successful partnership for landmine clearance is HDI's program in Mozambique, which will, with a contribution of \$250,000 from the Toronto-based SkyLink Aviation, Inc. and the U.S. DOS, fund advanced training courses for indigenous humanitarian demining personnel in Mozambique and purchase much-needed demining equipment.

HDI's Involvement in the Caucasus

Landmines continue to negatively affect the economy and threaten the lives of people who live in the mine-contaminated areas throughout the Caucasus. This need for action, combined with the increasingly important geostrategic role of the Caucasus for the United States and the world, prompted the HDI to partner with the U.S. DOS, local governments and a number of other organizations to initiate innovative landmine clearance programs in the region.

In Azerbaijan, HDI and its partners are raising funds to demine approximately one million square meters in the Fizuli District of western Azerbaijan. This part of the country was once a regional center of grape growing and wine production. Currently, landmines are scattered across thousands of hectares of once-productive vineyards in the region. HDI's goal is to raise sufficient funds to clear the landmines, restore the vineyards and revitalize the wine industry.

In Georgia, HDI is working with the Georgian Government to identify a number of areas throughout the country (excluding Abkhazia) that are contaminated with either landmines or UXO. Many of these areas are found on territory that once housed former Soviet military bases and are now preventing thousands of hectares of arable land from being used.

HDI's program for landmine clearance in Armenia was initiated by partnering with MLI and through the

concept of using MDDs to help in clearance operations. As a result of the newly generated focus on the Caucasus, MLI had already sent one team of MDDs to Armenia independently and is now sending another team of dogs in partnership with HDI, COAF, ITF and the U.S. DOS.

Azerbaijan

Landmines in Azerbaijan and Armenia are the legacy of the 1988–1994 conflict. According to UN estimates, landmines have killed or injured more than 4,000 Azerbaijani civilians since 1988, and more than one million Azerbaijan citizens became refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs). As reported in the *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) believes that up to 45 of Azerbaijan's 65 regions may be mine-affected, which is some 50 million square meters of land (according to the International Eurasia Press Fund survey in 2001) with the strongest impact on western Azerbaijan, including the Fizuli District. The *Landmine Monitor Report 2002* further reports that the most heavily mine-affected areas are farmland and cropland, but mines are also found in the irrigation systems and river basins, as well as near high voltage power lines and wells with drinking water.

Recognizing the imperative to clear the land and revitalize the local economy, the Institute has partnered with the New York Wine and Grape Foundation (NYWGF) to remove landmines in the Fizuli District of Azerbaijan and revitalize the region's dormant wine industry. Prior to the 1988–1994 conflict, grape growing in the Fizuli region of Azerbaijan employed 20,000 people, with 20,000 hectares under cultivation, producing 120,000 tons of grapes per year. In 1995, those figures were 5,000 hectares and 3,000 tons of grapes. The drop in productivity is primarily a result of landmines. The situation has continued to deteriorate over the last eight years.

The NYWGF is a private, not-for-profit organization representing 160 wineries in New York State. It is responsible for developing and executing promotion and research programs in support of all New York grapes grown

in all regions for all uses and centralizing these functions for the grape and wine industry. The Foundation's comprehensive research program has enhanced the economic viability of growing grapes in New York, improved the overall quality of New York wines and juices, and strengthened the marketability of New York grape products.



The first phase, which HDI is working on in conjunction with Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) and the U.S. DOS, concentrates on clearing a series of mine-contaminated vineyards (nearly one million sq m), at a cost of approximately \$750,000. HDI has secured \$400,000 in direct or matching grants and is now working with a number of partners to raise the remaining funds. ANAMA was established by Presidential Decree on July 18, 1998. It operates under the State Commission for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and is responsible for overall management, planning, coordination, resource mobilization and quality of all mine action operations within Azerbaijan. The organization's demining priorities include clearing areas with life-threatening dangers, supporting resettlement of IDPs, clearing reconstruction sites as requested by aid and development agencies, and providing food security through the clearance of agricultural and grazing lands. The second phase of this partnership calls for the restoration of the cleared land into productive vineyards, revitalization of the area's wine industry and the creation of new jobs for displaced Azerbaijanis who

■ Ralph Cwerman, HDI's President, and Jim Lawrence, Director of PM/MAIP at the State Department, survey a former vineyard, now a minefield, in the Fizuli region in Azerbaijan. C/O Mark Epstein



■ The HDI and the COAF present a \$100,000 check to the International Trust Fund at the State Department ceremony in June 2003. Pictured are, principles of HDI, COAF, the State Department, the Marshall Legacy Institute, the Armenian Embassy of the U.S., and the International Trust Fund. C/O Ruben Gamara

Landmines in Europe & the Caucasus

left the area during the 1988–1994 conflict. HDI is currently negotiating with a number of large U.S. based agri-businesses to achieve this goal. A key objective of this partnership is to create new conditions on the ground that will enable Azerbaijanis from the Fizuli District to return to their homes, reclaim their lives, and rebuild their historic winemaking legacy by cultivating the cleared land. Specialists from the NYWGF and the Cornell University Wine Research and Outreach Program will be providing technical assistance during this phase.



■ A landmine blast in a minefield in the Fizuli region in Azerbaijan. © Ralph Cwerman

HDI is pursuing a public awareness campaign for this program as well. In late 2002, HDI and the NYWGF brought together 30 top New York wineries and 12 premier New York restaurants in a special wine and food tasting called “Celebrate New York” to raise funds for landmine clearance in Azerbaijan. Over 500 people attended the event in New York City. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) and Yashar Aliyev, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, co-chaired the event. Senator Clinton said, “Each year, tens of thousands of civilians are killed or maimed by landmines and we are not doing nearly enough to help these innocent victims. This joint project of the HDI and the New York wine industry will not only make the land safe again for Azerbaijani civilians, but will also nurture the return of the centuries-old winemaking legacy of the Fizuli District.” More events are planned.

Armenia

According to the Armenian Ministry of Defense, the 900-kilometer-long line that divides the warring sides is replete with landmines. The *Landmine Monitor* reports that at least 1,700 hectares in regions bordering Azerbaijan (mostly agricultural and woodlands), are mine-contaminated. These hidden killers not only threaten lives, but also hinder the economic development of wide swathes of Armenian territory, including 25 percent of the arable land. These areas include crops, vineyards, orchards, and hayfields and pasture land.

cost-effective asset in most demining scenarios. Armenia’s topography and climate, for much of the year, are conducive to the use of MDDs, which are already accelerating demining efforts in Armenia, particularly in the areas where landmines impede everyday life and economic opportunities.

These funds are dedicated to purchasing, training and transporting six dogs. However, sustained operational funding is needed for these teams to cover additional costs of food, veterinary services,

medicine, kenneling and arrangements for the dogs’ handlers. Over a period of several years, these ancillary costs amount to about \$300,000 for a team of six dogs. This is where HDI’s partnership with the DOS becomes especially instrumental. The funds raised by HDI and COAF trigger the release of additional monies from a special DOS program funded by the U.S. Congress. The ITF, a non-profit Slovenia-based organization dedicated to removing landmines, also participated in the program, raising funds that the DOS then matched, thereby enabling the entire amount of approximately \$400,000 to be allocated for Armenian dog teams.

In the current phase of the partnership, HDI is working with the MLI and the U.S. DOS to bring the dogs to Armenia. MLI is a nonprofit, international humanitarian organization focusing on assisting nations in building affordable and sustainable programs to free their land of the destabilizing and devastating effects of landmines. MLI has previously partnered with the HDI to bring teams of highly trained MDD to severely mine-contaminated countries, such as Lebanon and Eritrea. Perry Baltimore, Executive Director of the MLI, says of this joint program, “The MLI/HDI partnership in Armenia is an exciting opportunity to extend both organizations’ vision of a mine-free world into the Caucasus. As a result of the government of Armenia’s appreciation for its initial group of six MDDs, they have requested an additional ‘six-pack’ of dogs and, by leveraging the resources of MLI and HDI, we are able to make this a reality.”

In the coming weeks, the six MDDs

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will be bought in Europe, trained at the Global Academy in Antonio, Texas, and then transported to Armenia after three months of specialized training. When this phase of the training is complete, the dogs will be shipped to Armenia and given to the Armenian National Mine Action Center in Echmiadzin. One or two Global Academy trainers will accompany the dog team to Armenia to help train the local dog handlers. The dogs will also be re-trained to work with their new handlers. After testing, they will receive certification and can begin work in the field.

Raising Public Awareness

Raising public awareness about the landmine tragedy is a top priority for HDI as well. To showcase the capabilities of mine-detecting dogs, HDI and the Children of Armenia Fund held a series of public events in the greater Boston Armenian community in April 2003. HDI and its partners held dog demonstrations at two local schools in Boston to announce the successful completion of their fundraising campaign at a demonstration of MDD’s capabilities.

Michael Sonnenfeldt, HDI’s co-founder and co-chairman, presented HDI’s role in this project: “Our mission at the Humpty Dumpty Institute is to ‘help put the pieces back together’ by bringing like-minded people and organizations together to forge new and unique public-private partnerships in the battle against landmines. We strongly believe that such partnerships provide the greatest impetus for effective humanitarian action.”

The keynote speaker of the evening was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Kara Bue, who explained the role of the DOS and shared her personal involvement and commitment to eradicating the landmine problem. “The first time I visited a landmine-affected area was in Sri Lanka,” remarked Deputy Assistant Secretary Bue. “I was surprised to see that I was being taken into, not away from, the center of a town. I had always envisioned that emplaced persistent mines were contained in remote, marked fields, away from the places where people lived and worked. To see landmines next to a

school building, landmines in a soccer field, landmines scattered throughout the busiest parts of a town is to understand that emplaced mines have the ability to affect every aspect of civilian life. I am proud to say that the Department of State is dramatically reducing the impact of persistent landmines through its humanitarian mine action demining program and public-private partnerships with organizations such as the Humpty Dumpty Institute and Children of Armenia Fund.”

Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr., special representative of the President and Secretary of State for mine action, addressed the participants in a video speech, prepared and taped especially for this occasion. “The landmine problem affects public health, hinders economic growth, threatens social stability and colors Armenia’s relations with its neighbors. Fortunately, you’re in good hands with these non-governmental organizations—the Humpty Dumpty Institute and the Children of Armenia Fund—to help you implement this initiative. And, I think we can all agree that you are in the best company of all by joining forces with mine-detecting dogs—truly man’s, woman’s and children’s best friend—as the focus of your initiative.”

On June 18, the HDI celebrated this success with its partners in the historic Treaty Room at the U.S. DOS. This event commemorated innovative public-private partnerships that will facilitate demining efforts in Armenia. Secretary Bloomfield hosted the ceremony and said of HDI’s partnership with the U.S. DOS: “The State Department and the Humpty Dumpty Institute have worked together for five years to develop additional partnerships that engage the private sector and civil society in humanitarian mine action. As Secretary of State Powell has said, governments cannot solve the global landmine problem by themselves. Today’s presentations are the latest examples of a productive Humpty Dumpty Institute/State Department collaboration to remove landmines through the development of public-private partnerships. Through the Humpty Dumpty Institute/State Department partnership, more than \$1.5 million has been leveraged for mine

clearance efforts around the world. The Humpty Dumpty Institute was instrumental in helping to inspire today’s donations.”



■ Two-year old Mine Detection Dog Radja from Global Academy showing off her mine detecting skills at the Sister’s Academy in Lexington as part of the HDI/COAF/MLI mine awareness raising campaign for Armenia. © Demetri Productions

In the coming year, HDI intends to broaden its scope and range of activities to include Georgia, as well as other countries around the world. The Institute will continue to raise funds and reach out to new constituencies through innovative partnerships with an entrepreneurial flare. With its partners, the HDI will continue to “put the pieces back together again.” ■

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