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### Media Note

#### Office of the Spokesman

Washington, DC  
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## First Phase of 'Landmine Impact Survey' of Iraq Completed

The first phase of a three-year, four million dollar “Landmine Impact Survey” of thirteen of Iraq’s eighteen provinces, has been completed. This Survey, funded by the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, provides an interim blueprint for the Iraqi Government and international donors to clear the landmines, unexploded ordnance, and abandoned munitions left from past conflicts, including any residue left from coalition military operations. These hazards threaten one of every five Iraqis.

This phase of the Survey was conducted in the provinces of Babylon, Basrah, Dahuk, Erbil, Karbala, Missan, Muthanna, Najaf, Qadissiya, Sulaymaniyah, Tameem, Dhi-Qar, and Wasit. The Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement is prepared to support further landmine impact survey work in the remaining five provinces (Baghdad, Al-Anbar, Diyala, Ninewa, Salah ad-din) when security conditions permit.

This phase has already enabled Iraqi authorities to prioritize removal of the most dangerous explosives, clear over 13.8 million square meters of productive land, and destroy nearly 140,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance and 13,000 landmines. Once the Survey is certified by the United Nations Mine Action Service and accepted by the Government of Iraq, it will give the Iraqi and donor governments a practical tool for allocating resources where they are most needed. It will also reinforce Iraq’s National Development Strategy and the UN’s International Compact for Iraq, and help Iraq to mobilize international humanitarian mine action assistance and other development support.

The Information Management & Mine Action Programs (iMMAP), part of the Veterans for America Foundation at the time, managed the Survey under a grant from the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement ([www.state.gov/t/pm/wra](http://www.state.gov/t/pm/wra)). Courageous Iraqi men and women, including teachers, doctors, and even a former admiral, methodically conducted the Survey via foot, car, tractor, and donkey under challenging conditions. Iraqis – both Arab and non-Arab - from the Shi’a, Sunni, Christian (including Assyrian, Armenian, and Chaldean), Kurdish, Turkomen, Marsh Arab, Yazidi, and Zoroastrian communities, risked their lives performing work that has already saved fellow Iraqis from injury and death and providing a framework for their country’s socio-economic recovery. See related photos at [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/)



[pix/b/91052.htm](http://pix/b/91052.htm).

Of the eighteen Landmine Impact Surveys that have been completed or that are still underway around the world, the Iraq project was unique in several respects. The Survey provided Iraq with its first census-quality data since 1997, even delineating towns and villages that were not on maps or in government records. The Survey also identified non-traditional communities consisting of thousands of farming families dispersed over vast areas in the south whose existence was heretofore unknown.

This project is but part of the more than \$110 million that the U.S. Department of State has invested in Iraq since fiscal year 2003 to clear landmines and other explosive hazards, provide mine risk education, assist mine survivors, help Iraq to create its first National Mine Action Authority, and establish its first non-governmental demining entity, the "Iraqi Mine/UXO Clearance Organization (IMCO)."

Extensive cooperation was critical to the success of the first phase. Iraq's National Mine Action Authority helped determine how and where the Survey should proceed. The European Commission enabled the United Nations Development Program to fund the Survey's chief technical advisor. Information derived from the Survey helped IMCO clear many of the most dangerous explosives discovered during the Survey. RONCO Consulting Corporation trained IMCO personnel to conduct those clearances and provided vital technical advice and logistics support, under its contract with the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement.

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