



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
of the United States of America

SPOKANE CHAPTER

"A LOCAL VOICE FOR GLOBAL COOPERATION" Spokane Chapter Vision Statement

December 2005 Newsletter
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Human Rights

Monday Evening, November 14, 2005

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Unitarian Universalist Church in Spokane

4340 West Fort Wright Drive

President's Message

Jo Stowell

Landmines are ancient weapons dating back at least 600 years. They consist of explosive materials contained in casings of metal, plastic or wood that detonate from the pressure of a footstep or a passing vehicle. Landmines are popular weapons of war because they cost as little as Three dollars to make and are easily deployed. They cost as much as one thousand dollars each to dismantle. General Sherman, the commander of the Union Army said that the use of landmines "was not war, but murder".

Landmines were used extensively in both WWI and WWII with more than 300 million anti-tank mines used in WWII alone. Since 1945 landmines have been used throughout the world on wars of liberation, civil wars and local conflicts. Their effect is enormously devastating economically, politically and socially.

Advocacy for an international ban on land mines comes primarily from the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), a network of NGO's. Today, the network represents over a thousand groups in over 60 countries. The ICBL received the Nobel Peace Price in 1997 for its groundbreaking work.

During an ICBL conference in December 1997, held specifically to sign an international anti-personnel landmine ban treaty, over 120 participating countries signed this treaty. However, the U.S., China, Russia and India, the main producers of landmines, have not yet signed. As of July 2, 2004, 143 countries have unequivocally agreed to stop the use, development, production, stockpiling and transfers of anti-personnel mines. The U.S., China, India, Israel, Pakistan, Russia and Turkey have agreed to be bound by the protocol that prohibits the indiscriminate use of mines and international use against civilians. In 2004 the U. S. increased funding for the Humanitarian Mine Action Program by 50% to 70 million a year but still did not sign the Mine Ban Treaty "because its terms would have required us to give up a needed military capability". This position is lamented by many, as this will allow indefinitely the use of mines in Iraq and emphasizes American exceptionalism under international law rather than American leadership.

American citizens can demonstrate their concern regarding the issue of landmines by supporting Adopt-A-Minefield, an NGO which raises funds to support humanitarian de-mining and survivor assistance in affected countries.

On November 14 we of the UNA-Spokane will come together in community sharing our favorite foods and joining in good conversation around the dinner table. Adopt-A-Minefield is our chapter's only fundraiser. It is an opportunity for our local community to reach out to the global community in an important and meaningful way.

2005 UNICEF HOLIDAY CATALOG IS HERE!

Judy Gardner and Global Folk Art @ 35 West Main Ave. have combined forces again this year to provide you with the latest selection of UNICEF greeting cards and gifts. Judy will have an assortment of items on hand for you to purchase at our November and December meetings. Global Folk Art began stocking them at the end of September. Most packages are priced at \$10 for ten cards. 90% of the proceeds goes directly to children's health, education, and nutrition programs.

Our UNA-Spokane chapter receives the remaining 10% which totaled \$300 for our treasury last year. Judy can be reached at 747-5252 or email her at jkandjg@myexcel.com.

Landmine Facts

The Bad News

Landmines are indiscriminate killers that target civilians long after a conflict has ended.

At the beginning of the 20th century, nearly 80 per cent of landmine victims were military personnel. Today, over 80 per cent of landmine victims are civilians.

Most kinds of landmines last forever. Mines laid during WWII are still killing and maiming civilians.

There are 82 mine-affected countries around the world. No mine clearance was recorded in 16 of the affected countries and no mine risk education activities were recorded in 25 countries.

From 2002 through to June 2003, there were new landmine casualties reported in 65 countries. Forty-one of these countries were not at war.

UNICEF estimates that 30-40 % of all landmine victims are children under the age of 15. Mines kill and mutilate 8,000 to 10,000 children each year.

Landmines affect both men and women but studies show that women suffer more when they become victims of landmines. Fewer women receive mobility aids, such as artificial limbs, and they may receive less attention right after the landmine blast. As a result, the fatality rate is higher for females (43%) than for males (29%).

Landmines set in motion a series of events that leads to environmental damage in the forms of soil degradation, deforestation, pollution of water resources with heavy metals and altering entire species' populations through degrading habitats and altering food chains.

Landmines affect every aspect of human life including the ability for refugees to return to their homes. A report from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees published in 1997 stated that 13.2 million refugees, 4.9 million internally displaced people and 3.3 million returnees were at risk from landmines.

Better News

After a decade of concerted, concentrated humanitarian mine action, the international community is seeing once mine-infested countries declare themselves mine-safe, while other mine-affected countries have developed an indigenous demining capability, which will allow them to become mine-safe in the near future.

As of 2004, Costa Rica, Djibouti, El Salvador, Kosovo and Moldova have all been declared mine safe.

The number of active mines in the world is decreasing. As of February 2004, a total of 68 signators of the Mine Ban Treaty have destroyed nearly 30.5 million antipersonnel landmines. Fifty-five of these countries have completed stockpile destruction while 13 are in the process of destruction.

There were no confirmed instances of trade in antipersonnel mines in 2003. Several countries outside the Mine Ban Treaty extended or reconfirmed their moratoria on exports of these mines.

Yes! I want to join UNA-USA Spokane!

Membership Category Levels

\$10. Student.

\$25. Introductory (first year only).

\$25. Fixed Income.

\$40. Individual or Household Member.

Your personal support can make a difference!

\$ _____ Local UNA-Spokane Gift

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Make Check payable to UNA - USA..

Mail to: Betty Banks, 2429 W. Sanson Ave., Spokane, WA 99205.

UNA-USA Spokane Chapter Newsletter is published monthly, September through May.

Your communication is appreciated. Unless otherwise noted, please direct your comments to: President Jo Stowell, 1118 E. 34th Ave., Spokane, WA 99203. 509-624-3608 jck@georgetown.edu

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