National Policies

The United States is currently conducting a comprehensive review of its landmine policy. This is the first such review since 2003. The review is ongoing and there is no specific deadline for its completion.

Even though the United States in conducting a review of its landmine policy, the United States recognizes that AVM have a clear military utility.

Military Utility of Anti-Vehicle Mines (AVM)

1. AVM, as well as other obstacles, work together to block, fix, disrupt, and channel enemy tanks, armored personnel carriers, and other fighting vehicles, particularly as a means of defense against an enemy attack.

   - Friendly forces may be seeking to defend themselves or important military objectives, including staging areas, supply depots, or key terrain from an enemy attack.

   - Friendly forces may even be seeking to protect civilian populated areas that lie in the path of the enemy’s advance.

2. AVM have proven themselves to be particularly effective and efficient obstacles that can be emplaced efficiently provide friendly forces:

   - more time and space to reposition themselves into a defense,

   - a greater opportunity for limited engineer assets to accomplish other critical defensive missions, such as building survivability positions for the defending forces (e.g., command and control centers, artillery positions, air defense systems, and critical equipment and supplies), and

   - the ability to focus fires on the advancing enemy forces in order to blunt and turn back the attack, and potentially mount a counter attack. Obstacles, such as AVM, multiply the effects of fires on the enemy.

3. The importance of having the ability to block, fix, disrupt, and channel enemy forces effectively and efficiently cannot be overstated.
• AVM can help a numerically or military inferior force thwart the attack of a more numerous and capable enemy force.

• The ability to emplace AVM effectively and efficiently through scatterable mine systems also helps guard against strategic, operational, or tactical surprise by an enemy with a large number of tanks, armored personnel carriers, and other fighting vehicles, which could otherwise quickly overwhelm friendly defensive positions.
  o Friendly forces are not always able to know in advance when an attack is coming, or have the time necessary to prepare a defense against a pending attack.
  o Having the capability to emplace AVM may deter enemy forces from seeking strategic, operational, or tactical surprise because they know that their attack can be blunted and turned back before achieving their objectives.

• Lastly, having the ability to focus fires on enemy tanks and vehicles that are blocked, fixed, disrupted, or channeled, rather than sprinting at will toward friendly positions, can allow friendly forces to use fewer munitions, and, as a result, cause less collateral damage.

4. Air- or artillery-delivered AVM provide a particularly effective and efficient capability. Air- or artillery-delivered AVM:

• provide friendly forces the ability to project obstacle effects throughout the battlefield, including areas that are physically inaccessible to friendly engineer forces because of either difficult terrain or contamination from the enemy’s use of chemical or biological weapons;

• allow friendly forces to deny the enemy access to certain areas behind enemy lines that the enemy might desire to use for artillery, rocket, or missile firing positions or which possess routes to facilities or bunkers containing chemical or biological weapons.

5. To summarize, if AVM are not available:
makes it more difficult to target and hit enemy tanks and other vehicles in an attack because they are moving, rather than static as enemy forces attempt to breach obstacles belts with AVM;

- reduces the time available to target enemy tanks and other vehicles in an attack because they are moving faster than would after having breached obstacle belts with AVM;

- makes friendly forces more vulnerable to the effect of enemy fires during an attack because engineer assets are otherwise tied up constructing less effective and efficient obstacles, such as tank ditches or berms, and have less time and resources to construct survivability positions for defending forces;

- allows for a great number of enemy tanks and other vehicles to shoot at friendly forces during the attack because they are not otherwise busy trying to breach complex obstacles belts;

- requires more friendly forces to protect exposed flanks and to defend positions, and the use of a greater number of munitions, and therefore results in a greater number of military casualties and more collateral damage; and

- allows for greater number of enemy tanks and other vehicles to complete the attack because they are not stopped by the AVM or otherwise targeted by fires while in the obstacle belts.

While the United States believes that AVM have a clear military utility, we are also aware that the indiscriminate or irresponsible use of AVM can cause humanitarian problems.

**National Policies/Possible solutions**

1. To address the humanitarian problem caused by the indiscriminate use of persistent landmines, the United States has eliminated all persistent mines, both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines.

   - The United States has removed all persistent anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines from the active inventory.
• The United States removed non-detectable, plastic anti-vehicle mines from its active inventory and destroyed them as of 2009; except for a small quantity to be used for countermine/demining testing and training purposes.

• To date the United States has destroyed 1.7M of 2.6M persistent anti-vehicle and anti-personnel mines. The remaining mines will be destroyed through our normal conventional ammunition demilitarization process. A small quantity of non-self destruct mines will be retained for countermine/demining testing and training purposes.

2. All U.S. mines remaining in the active inventory have a highly reliable, self-destruct mechanism with a self-deactivation back-up that prevent the munitions from becoming persistent hazards.

All mines have field selectable self destruct settings of 4 hours, 48 hours and 15 days, preventing the mines from becoming a persistent hazard.

The United States conducts periodic surveillance testing on the entire active self-destruct inventory by sampling and testing random lots of mine and mine systems.

The United States also conducts full performance testing on the dispenser and mine level to identify weak, marginal or a breakdown of components due to aging. If any singular mine tested has any performance or reliability issues the entire lot is taken out of the active inventory and identified for destruction in order to assure safety and reliability for our soldiers.

3. All U.S. self destruct mines are detectable with a commonly-available mine detector.

4. The United States will not transfer any AVM that does not have a self-destruct or self-deactivation device.

4. The United States has continued development and production of new handemplaced munitions systems called “Networked Munitions” as an alternative to persistent anti-personnel and anti-vehicle landmines.

5. The United States will present a briefing on Networked Munitions during today’s session on “Possible measures to address the humanitarian impact of MOTAPM.”