

#### S. AFRICA: LUCRATIVE LANDMINES

South Africa's arms industry hopes to earn money cleaning up the world's deadly landmines mess, which it is also helping to create. Officials at Denel Ltd., the successor to Armscor (Armaments Corporation of South Africa), said in September that the lifting of sanctions will let them compete for lucrative contracts to supply landmine clearing equipment and mineproof vehicles to United States and UN-financed landmine clearance programmes. They have said little, however, on South Africa's role as purveyor of deadly anti-personnel and anti-vehicle landmines.

That role is amply documented in a recently declassified US Army Intelligence study which names South Africa (along with China, Egypt and Pakistan) as one of the developing world's most 'ambitious marketers of landmine munitions deeply involved in high technology proliferation'.

Armscor has produced landmines at least since the 1960s, building on explosives manufacturing capacity originally brought to the country by British firms, including Marconi, Electrical Musical Industries (now Thorn EMI) and Imperial Chemical Industries. The South African Defence Forces have boasted since the early 1980s of domestic industry's ability to meet all landmine and landmine clearance requirements, though this 'self-sufficiency' stemmed partly from local copying of American Claymore anti-personnel mines and other foreign designs.

While *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* and *União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola* have been the primary foreign users of South African landmines, there have also been reports of exports to Iran and Iraq. In addition, two Denel subsidiaries, Naschem and Mechem, are offering foreign military buyers their jointly developed vehicle and helicopter-mounted landmine distribution system, designed to be used with deadly effect against people and vehicles alike. Those countries wanting to break the UN arms embargo against South Africa (arms and oil sales were exempted from the UN's recent decision to abrogate sanctions against South Africa) may be able to negotiate a double contract with Denel. After supplying the landmines, at an opportune moment Denel is then able to offer the victims the mine clearance services of Mechem Consultants.

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