

THE LANDMINE BAN AND NGOS: THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

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ABSTRACT

With the broader independent bases of public support that NGOs command, they were better able to target banning landmines long before governments were ready to do so, propose most of the precepts of a formal ban landmine treaty, and mobilize public pressure to force through a weapons prohibition that virtually no one thought possible when the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) was formed in 1992. The ICBL encompasses more than 1000 NGOs from both developed and developing states and is loosely organized in a global campaign to ban landmines that was able to bridge deep North/South differences among governments. Many expected that North-South differences would block an agreement as is typical with most multilateral arms control treaties. United in passionately alleviating the effects of the anti-personnel landmine use, the ICBL members were able to effectively utilize communications technologies to disseminate information to each other, the media, their respective governments and the public, which, in turn, generated government support for a landmine ban. Most importantly, communications technologies allowed NGOs to discuss contentious subjects among themselves, and then to take an agreed upon position to their respective government delegations. As a result, the Ottawa Convention to Ban Anti-Personnel Landmines was negotiated, signed and entered into force faster than any other major treaty in the world's history. Moreover, it is the first multilateral arms control treaty that was not supported by the major powers and the first disarmament treaty that bans a weapon already in widespread use. This paper contends that communications technologies facilitated the landmine ban movement, especially in the latter stages of the campaign. These technologies allowed ICBL members to disseminate research widely and, in most cases, publicize information quickly to influence state landmine policies toward banning landmines. Furthermore, these technologies allowed the ICBL to communicate and coordinate among themselves and with the governments, media and public in a quickly and cost

effective manner. Finally, these technologies reduce coalitional building costs, especially among southern NGOs, and allow for information collection and dissemination in an issue area once monopolized by states, namely security. This paper concludes that the ICBL's effective application and utilization of communications technologies provides a model for future NGO coalitional building and strategies toward working with or against state interest.

"[T]he involvement of civil society and the information technology revolution are the foundations on which a profound democratization of international politics is being built." Statement by Lloyd Axworthy, Canadian Foreign Minister, to the NGO Forum on Banning Anti-Personnel Landmines, Oslo, Norway, September 7, 1997.

INTRODUCTION

In a span of less than fifteen months, profound and rapid change in state perception toward landmine use resulted in the Ottawa Treaty banning anti-personnel landmines.¹ This paper examines how the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)² utilized communications technologies to help achieve the treaty against the backdrop of two basic questions: How Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and communications technologies interacted to influence the creation of norms at the heart of state sovereignty - weapons? In addition, what are the larger policy and theoretical implications this campaign and the role of communications technologies may have on international relations? Thus, this paper is an empirical case study of how the ICBL utilized communications technologies in order to achieve the ban, and what are the broader implications for international relations. This paper fills this gap by providing an empirical case study on an issue that has received much attention, but ironically relatively little analysis. There is no question, however, that the ICBL was very effective in achieving their landmine ban goal as evinced by the signing of the Ottawa Treaty by more than one-hundred and thirty states,³ and its entry into force faster than any arms control treaty in the world's history.

While International NGO policymaking entrepreneurial skills and lobbying strategies, such as promoting their messages through the media, taking public protesting actions, and mass letter writing campaigns are well-known in other international issue-areas, such as the environment and human rights, the landmine ban case exhibits relatively new communications technological strategies to advertise their message and reduce coalitional building and maintenance costs. These recent technologies are one of the major factors in the rise in NGO power on the landmine issue. This paper will focus on these newer strategies by applying them to the landmine ban campaign, which is one of the first transnational movements that actively integrated and utilized communications technologies to achieve its goals. In particular, it examines how the ICBL incorporated communications technologies in their activities to achieve an effective campaign.

The study of how the ICBL utilized communications technologies is important to international relations because it highlights how a coalition of NGOs helped achieve a ban on a weapon in widespread use and in opposition to the major world powers for the first time. Moreover, it also shows how the ICBL used communications technologies to successfully prod the international community to pay attention to the landmine issue that ultimately led to a majority of states banning a weapon retaining military utility.

LANDMINES: A HUMANITARIAN DISASTER

The 20th century is ending with the entry into force of the Ottawa Treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines. The achievement of the treaty marks an incredible accomplishment: It is the "first time, the majority of the nations of the world will agree to ban a weapon which has been in military use by almost every country in the world."⁴ In contrast, the military utility of previously banned weapon systems is questionable.⁵ The treaty also did not have the support of many major powers, which is contrary to most multilateral disarmament agreements.⁶ Even as late as 1994, there was consensus among all states that landmines were legal.⁷ In March 1995, Belgium became the first state to pass a domestic law providing for a comprehensive landmine ban.⁸ Less than thirty-two months later, on December 2, 1997, Belgium was joined by 122 states in signing the comprehensive ban treaty. Currently more than 130 states have signed and more than 60 have ratified the treaty.⁹ When it entered into force March 1, 1999, it became the fastest major international agreement ever to enter into force in history.¹⁰ Academics,¹¹ diplomats¹² and NGO representatives¹³ call the Ottawa Treaty's genesis and negotiations an innovative model for the future development of international law. Even the Nobel Committee recognized this unique coalition by awarding the ICBL and its coordinator Jody Williams the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize, in part for helping create a fresh form of diplomacy. The Norwegian Nobel Committee stated in the award announcement that hope the ICBL model could serve "[a]s a model for similar processes in the future" so that "it could prove of decisive importance to the international effort for disarmament and peace."¹⁴

The founding ICBL member organizations, such as the Vietnam Veterans of American Foundation (VVAFA), Medico International of Germany, Handicap International of France, and Mines Advisory Group of Great Britain, "had experience with treating landmine victims in their overseas clinics and had firsthand knowledge of an antipersonnel weapon's tragic effects."¹⁵ These effects include more than 26,000 people per year of whom an estimated 80 percent are civilian, and the killings of more people than biological, chemical and nuclear weapons combined.¹⁶ Further aggravating the problem is that landmines will continue killing people because there are between 59-69 million landmines currently deployed,¹⁷ which makes them "one of the most toxic and widespread pollution[s] facing mankind."¹⁸

In addition to these quantitative effects are the qualitative effects resulting from landmine injuries. The nature and purpose of most landmines themselves is to maim and not kill the targeted individual. Put otherwise, their purpose is to take off body parts to cause maximum punishment on the human body. The conventional wisdom behind this strategy is that a wounded enemy soldier is more costly to the enemy than a dead one and more of a burden. Unfortunately, for many civilian communities the nature of war is changing from targeting the professional military of the enemy to targeting its civilians. In addition, landmines are indiscriminate weapons in the sense that they cannot be "targeted" toward specific individuals. Once a person deploys a landmine and walks away from it, she cannot predict who will detonate that landmine. Compounding the problem of landmine injuries - usually amputation, if not death - those countries infested by landmines host the largest amputee populations in the world. For example, in Cambodia, the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) estimates that one in every 236 Cambodians is an amputee. In comparison, it estimates the ratio of amputees to the general population in the United States is one in 22,000.

The paper is organized in two sections. The first section addresses the ICBL and the role communications technologies in the landmine campaign in three areas: 1) Quick information analysis and provision; 2) Constructing, creating and maintaining a virtual organization; and 3) Building trust and transparency. The second section examines the larger policy and theoretical implications that this campaign may have on international relations. It concludes that the ICBL use of informational technologies portends new avenues by which informational technologies can be used to influence foreign policymaking. One of the broader implications of this case study is that the landmine campaign also highlights the changing relationship between states and NGOs. Finally, it also discusses implications that can be drawn from the landmines campaign for other NGO coalitions attempting to influence foreign policymaking.¹⁹

PART ONE: THE ICBL AND THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

State monopoly of sovereignty started to erode before the landmine issue got on the international agenda in the early 1990s. Since the end of the Cold War, state sovereignty has continually been challenged by NGOs because of "the need for global action on transnational problems and the increasing ease of instant communication have helped to expand the number of NGOs at the global level as well as their role in multilateral diplomacy."²⁰ The transformation of NGOs as increasingly important international actors is fueled by the rapid development of communications technologies. As Jessica Mathews, President of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace stated "[t]hese technologies have broken governments' monopoly on the collection and management of large amounts of information and have taken away from governments the deference that they enjoyed because of that monopoly."²¹ Agreeing with her are a "growing number of other scholars and analysts who also point out that breakthroughs in telecommunications and transportation have undermined state authority by ending the state's monopoly on information; that there is an increasing reliance on nonstate entities such as NGOs for focus and direction, drafting, and implementation of declarations, platforms, and treaties on crucial international issues, including human rights, the environment, and the proliferation of land mines."²² The implication is that these technologies have allowed NGOs greater power in issues traditionally monopolized by states.

Historically, NGOs have been excluded from security issues in part to lack of expert information and analyses. Countering military arguments for landmine use by using communications technologies, such as the Internet, media and newsletters, the ICBL was able to diminish military calls for preservation of the landmine as a legitimate weapon and opposition to the ban. From the very beginning of the campaign, ICBL members produced extremely solid analyses to support the case for a mine ban and refute specific arguments raised by ban opponents. One of the leading Canadian Government negotiators, Robert Lawson, stated that NGOs were critical to the success of the treaty's achievement, while they were especially helpful "in bringing the issue from the field to foreign capitols."²³

1. Quick Information Provision

A. Introduction The ICBL's ability to provide quick and reliable information during the UN CCW negotiations in 1995 and 1996 laid the groundwork for diplomatic and public disenchantment with the UN negotiating forums and for pressure

to create an alternative negotiating forum that could achieve a landmine ban in a relatively short period of time. Cooperative information exchange between the ICBL and states eventually led to an alternative diplomatic avenue, led by the Canadian Government in 1997, to ban landmines resulting in a breakaway from the UN weapon negotiating forums.²⁴

The ICBL used communications technologies during this period as a way to initiate and prod the international community toward paying attention to the landmine issue. Surprisingly, the ICBL only used basic communications technologies, such as the telephone and fax, during this time-period. It did not emphasize e-mail or web page technology as a communication tool until later in the campaign.

The ICBL initiative and effort in the early 1990s ultimately led to state action toward banning a weapon in widespread use for the first time. They effectively competed with states to control and move the landmine issue on and up the international political agenda by providing faster and higher quality information than states were able to produce, analyze and address. Consequently, the ICBL members became essential participants in a process that they helped initiate by participating in landmine conferences and treaty drafting. The ICBL became indispensable to this process because they could provide informational and lobbying power that states could not ignore. Even during the consensus and state based United Nations (UN) negotiating forums of the CCW, NGOs became firmly established at all landmine conferences because of the wealth and quality of the landmine information that they were able to provide states.²⁵

B. Media Technologies The ICBL had the technical ability to research and publicize information quickly and early enough in the agenda setting process of international conferences to affect state landmine policy development. By controlling the agenda - what was to be discussed and how - the ICBL established the context of the landmine debate as humanitarian rather than military. The ICBL was able to utilize communications technologies to disseminate information concerning the effects of landmine use in infested states to the attention of the international community, other ICBL members, the media, their respective governments and the public. This effort greatly influenced the landmine positions of many states. Canadian Foreign Minister Axworthy commented that states can no longer "ignore the power and reach of new information technologies that allow the experience of Angola and Cambodia to be brought into people's living rooms."²⁶ Axworthy's implication was that these technologies allowed for information collection and dissemination in an issue area once monopolized by states, namely security, and in far away places to be brought to the public and their governments.

During the ICBL's early years it encouraged the media to focus on the victims as a way to garner wide and intensive attention. As the victim novelty angle of the landmine story wore out, the media continued to focus on the illegality of the weapons. Soon, "one by one, major media sources in almost all regions of the world began to endorse the concept of a global ban on AP mines."²⁷ This was a planned strategy on the ICBL's part as it decided very early in the movement to develop "several traveling photograph exhibits and videos" to highlight the horrible consequences of landmine use to policymakers and the general public.²⁸ In one notable case, during 1997 campaigners "traveled 7500 miles across the USA in five weeks to raise awareness about landmines by giving over 1000 presentations to audiences in over 75 cities."²⁹ During the trip, they "operated a mobile media center using a laptop computer with modem, mobile telephone and digital camera to record each days events and email back to the broader US campaign with daily updates recorded on the campaign's web site."³⁰ In late 1997, a similar Ban Bus program took place in Belgium.³¹

C. E-mail Communications The ICBL was also able to utilize a few communications technologies across a range of dissemination and communications strategies, especially in the latter years of the campaign. The ICBL internal communications framework utilized telephones and fax machines. It was more than five years into the campaign (in 1996) that e-mail became a more widely utilized communications tool as the primary method for ICBL leaders to coordinate strategies among its members. They emphasize that e-mail communications was primarily used for internal ICBL communications rather than "for communications outside of the campaign."³²

The ICBL external communications network also entailed those same communications tools - telephones, fax machines and e-mail - but since the objectives for external communications were different from those for internal communications, they were used differently. E-mail communications to government policymakers was also encouraged by the ICBL as an appropriate form of "contact," but not a major part of the lobbying strategy.³³ While the importance of e-mail communications may have been integral to ICBL communications during the later years of the campaign, it "alone did not 'move the movement.'"³⁴ External communications primarily emphasized personal lobbying, such as "banging on the doors of everybody on a regular basis" was also a major part of the campaign in bringing governments on board.³⁵ One of the co-founder of the ICBL, Bobby Mueller, Executive Director of Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA), disparages any notion that e-mail communications significantly helped

achieve the treaty. He commented that "[t]here is so much romanticized gobbledegook going on out there today about people clattering away on E-mail and moving the world on this issue [landmines]. Nonsense. This is basic politics 101. It's political strength. It's money."³⁶

One of the reasons that recently developed communications technologies, especially e-mail and web sites, did not make a significant difference in the ICBL's strategy is that many NGOs and governments did not have access to them or were just learning how to use them. Some of even the most basic communication technologies, such as the telephone are out of reach of many of the world's population, many of whom live in landmine infested states. According to a 1998 publication, for example, "[h]alf of the world's population had never made a phone call."³⁷ Internet communications penetration of the public, of course, is much lower. In the United States, the "[p]ercentage of Americans online has risen from 14% to 41% in three years" by October 1999.³⁸ It was not until several years later that the ICBL began promoting communications technology as a major communications and lobbying tool, and encouraged new members to get on-line. By 1999, the ICBL web site provided registration materials to members and visitors for more than five separate e-mail list groups ranging from media landmine news updates to campaign news, including the differing ICBL task forces.³⁹

D. Web Pages Another form of communications technology utilized by the ICBL and its members were web pages. The pages helped provide the media and interested public and policymakers with information on a 24-hour basis and easy access. It also helped generate governmental respect for the ICBL.⁴⁰ Web sites also greatly enhance the ability of NGOs to compile central information and make it available rapidly to activists. More specifically, it allows for individuals working from their homes and/or private locations to pressure governments.⁴¹ Beyond being an information source for governments, members and the media, the sites also provide the public with a source for updated landmine information. Most of these sites are hyper-linked, leading to increase visits. Recently, these websites are being used by the ICBL members as fundraising and marketing tools, which is parallel with an overall trend in the NGO world. In the later part of 1999, for example, charity web-sites started to proliferate.⁴² According to Daniel Langan, director of public information for the National Charities Information Bureau, "[t]he Internet is the future charitable giving"⁴³ by encouraging more charities to go on-line to research funding opportunities and keep up to date with the nonprofit and NGO communities.⁴⁴

Similar to the results from external e-mail communications, the benefits of using the web were at best minimal. The ICBL did not have a web site until March 1996,⁴⁵ when VVAF donated some of its organizational web site pages to the ICBL in the capacity of housing the USCBL campaign coordinator.⁴⁶ This initiative came in part from Mary Wareham, the United States Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL) Coordinator from 1995 to 1998, who wanted a few pages to store the USCBL and ICBL web site. Only afterwards did the major organizations in the ICBL start acquiring web sites.⁴⁷ At the time, there was very little landmine web site information, except for a UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations web site,⁴⁸ which itself provided outdated and unreliable information.⁴⁹ Soon obtaining individual organizational web sites addressing the landmine issue became very popular among ICBL members. By May 1999, for example, there were more than 25 major landmine sites recommended by the ICBL as sources of further information.⁵⁰ It was only in early 1998 that the ICBL created their own website, which is maintained in Oslo, Norway by a young Norwegian webmaster, Kjell Knudsen, hired by the ICBL.⁵¹

Web site fundraising, for example, is currently being conducted effectively by the Zapatista National Liberation Army fighting the Mexican Government for Chiapas self-rule. It has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars using the Internet.⁵² While it is still premature to judge the influence of ICBL web fundraising, visitors to the ICBL and many other ICBL member web sites can donate or purchase campaign materials from the web sites. For example, by May 1999, the ICBL listed twenty-eight landmine publications available by more six websites.⁵³

In early 1999, the ICBL started to encourage people interested in starting a landmine ban campaign in their own countries or researching more about landmine information to visit its website in order to educate themselves about the landmine issue.⁵⁴ More importantly, they could investigate the landmine situation in their own countries by addressing such questions as: 1) Does your country produce and/or export APMs?; 2) Has your country signed/ratified the Mine Ban Treaty?, and, 3) Are there many victims and survivors of mine injuries eg. ex-military or people living in certain parts of the country?⁵⁵

E. Conclusion These media, e-mail and web site technologies allow for NGOs to mobilize quickly in response to state actions or international events as warranted. This follows along the lines of a "war room" strategy that allows for quick and repeated counter attacks to any actual or potential threat to a core value. In other words, by utilizing information technologies, NGOs are better able to provide information in a quickly and timely fashion in order to diminish State control of information to the media and public, and other governments. The ICBL Co-ordinator, Jody Williams, for

example, usually rose around 4 AM to work the computer to send e-mail instructions to ICBL members and in response to recent events.⁵⁶

The ICBL case also shows how NGOs capitalizing on communications technologies are able to address international issues very quickly and move it onto and along the international political agenda.⁵⁷ Perhaps the broader implication is that "the most fundamental aspect of globalization is the pervasive compression of time and space, affecting the way we think, feel and act, introducing speed and proximity as defining attributes of our daily human experience."⁵⁸ The speed of the Ottawa Treaty's development is in contrast to past diplomatic attempts to address issues, which usually entail years and decades to resolve issues.

Solely crediting the Internet for the successful creation and initiation of the landmine ban movement and the achievement of the Ottawa, however, is not completely accurate. When the ICBL was created in 1991, the Internet was not a familiar or utilized communication tool until several years later into the campaign. The lack of e-mail use in the early years is more reflective of the low rate of Internet availability and use among society as e-mail and other Internet technologies were just coming on-line. Therefore, during the early years of the campaign (1991-late 1995) relied on extensive use of telephone and fax communication technologies. Because fax technology was relatively new in the early 1990s, "it was 'exciting'" and since the "[i]nformation arriving almost instantaneously by fax was perceived to be more important - and thus more deserving of an immediate response - than regular mail."⁵⁹ E-mail communications became more important later in the campaign as the technology became available and, most importantly, when the ICBL broadened its focus from the Western states, many of whom produced mines, to Southern states, where most of the landmines are located. ICBL members began to use e-mail communication more frequently until the switch fully occurred in late 1995 and early 1996.⁶⁰

2. Virtual Organizations: Reducing Coalitional Building and Maintenance Costs

A. Introduction Recently international political commentators claim that NGOs have proliferated in recent years because of "the revolution in information and communications technology."⁶¹ In the case of the ICBL pursuing the landmine ban we have seen above how these technologies allowed it to disseminate information widely and quickly. This section will discuss how these technologies were utilized in constructing the ICBL as a "vertical organization." This paper uses the definition of vertical organizations as "unstructured ad hoc clusters of people who perhaps never met" but share a sense of common passion and quickly mobilize for political action.⁶² In addition to helping the ICBL construct its organization, these technologies help it to maintain a unified and cohesive coalition, which entailed communicating and coordinating strategy among a wide variety of NGOs in more than seventy states. The role of communications technology in developing a virtual organization will be discussed below in two parts: 1) Reducing coalitional building costs; 2) Reducing communications costs.

B. Reducing Coalitional Building Costs These technologies have also helped NGOs reach out to each other across geographical space.⁶³ Broadening the membership base was deemed by ICBL leadership as an essential priority in order to achieve a nearly universal ban. One of its strategies was to generate more public pressure on states through continual membership expansion by either supporting the creation of new country landmine ban campaigns or attracting existing NGOs to join. The ICBL's creation of a wide ranging coalition with wide ethnic, geographical, organizational and religious diversity was one of the campaign's major accomplishments. Most of this credit should go to the ICBL leaders who "did a fantastic job of identifying opportunities to advance the campaign's goals and alerting to its global network of supporters through newsletters, e-mail, [and] the web."⁶⁴

While communications technologies greatly assisted ICBL leaders in building the coalition, the more important implication for their role in international relations is that they help to significantly reduce coalitional building costs, especially among southern NGOs. More importantly, these technologies allowed the ICBL to expand quickly and effectively to southern states at a minimal cost. Such expansion truly helped to create "a global movement rather than North Atlantic dominated" and helped provide guidance and enhanced data collection and dissemination by regional campaigners.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the establishment of regular newsletters and e-mail list was deemed important for building landmine ban alliances and coalitions.⁶⁶

After the treaty signing, the ICBL encouraged newly forming national landmine ban campaigns to begin with informational technology tools, such as e-mail address, in order to be connected to the campaign. Some of the funding for these technologies came from the Landmines Project at the Open Society Institute, which supported communications technology procurement for NGOs.⁶⁷ The ICBL, for example, donated to many start-up national campaigns "access to a computer" in which they could begin to write press releases, contact the media and public..."activities that can begin without many financial resources."⁶⁸ As a way to help jump start the landmine ban

campaigns in Russia and the Caucasus region, especially Chechnya and Abkhazia, the ICBL was asked to help build up "a basic infrastructure for [the] mine campaigns" through "concrete" means, such as "help with getting basic communications like telephone, email, computer, etc."⁶⁹

C. Reducing Communication Costs In addition to helping the ICBL reduce coalitional building costs, these technologies also helped reduce the costs associated with communications. Communications technologies helped ICBL members overcome geographical separation among the ICBL members, whom come from more than seventy different states, and government control of information at a lower cost than traditional forms of communications. This technologies were especially important to the ICBL in 1997 as more southern NGOs joined the campaign and as the early December treaty signing date neared. While the traditional forms for communication, such as telephone, faxes and mail, were instrumental in the ICBL's formative years, it required a tremendous amount of time and money. Once established on the Internet, ICBL leaders were able to send more information in a less amount of time at a cheaper cost through e-mail. During the initial phase of the campaign, for example, in 1992 and 1993, Jody Williams, the ICBL Coordinator, would take meeting minutes and talking points by her laptop computer, then disseminate them by fax and then later by e-mail. ⁷⁰ Moreover, the web site informed members of campaign activities negating the need for further ICBL correspondence. Once utilized, geographical distance no longer matters as much as when information technologies were logistically challenging and financially burdensome to allow individuals and NGOs to communicate on a regular basis across borders and regions.

In sum, these technologies dramatically reduced the communication costs for southern NGOs to participate as an active ICBL member. It also enabled Northern NGOs to incorporate southern NGOs into the decision-making process. ICBL leaders observed that in late 1995 and early 1996, when e-mail "became established within the ICBL, its lower costs and increased reliability relative to telephone and fax made it particularly important in facilitating communication with campaigners in developing nations."⁷¹

Moreover, the relatively low cost of e-mail communications and collecting data and ICBL updates from the Web provided the ICBL with an avenue for helping to assist Southern Landmine Ban Campaigns in a low-cost fashion. In turn, this provided the southern NGOs from most of the world's most heavily mined areas with an inexpensive avenue to provide field data to northern NGOs, whom, in turn, disseminated it to governmental representatives, the media and the public.

Another related point is that Internet technologies also allowed these NGOs operating in countries with authoritarian governments to avoid and circumvent Government controls and censorship over traditional media outlets, such as newspapers and television. It is more difficult for governments to control Internet technologies from being utilized by their citizens and from communications originating from foreign soil. These technologies weaken governmental monopolies on informational control and dissemination. It has also "eroded the deference governments enjoyed because of that greater knowledge."⁷²

3. Building Transparency and Trust

A. Introduction Communications technologies also greatly broaden the range of contact points for NGOs, governments and the public to meet. Some international relations scholars argue that communications technologies are one of the major reasons for the globalization of world politics. They believe that these technologies help facilitate the de-coupling of various international activities from fixed geographical locations and hence issue control by governments.⁷³ The NGO role in building transparency and trust among themselves and with states and international organizations, such as the UN, is enhanced by informational technologies. These technologies allow international actors to facilitate trans-national, -geographical, and - cultural relationships with governments, including soliciting state reaction and responses to be inputted back into social movements, such as NGO campaigns. In transnational coalitions "it is natural that a web of informal links develops to confront issues defined in the formal structure."⁷⁴

B. Facilitating Coordination Among ICBL Members A major challenge for the ICBL was keeping diverse composition of its membership on the same page. The ICBL's "handful of key full-time and paid activists" utilized fax machines and the Internet in order to help connect the more than 1000 NGOs representing more than 70 states making up.⁷⁵ While human rights, medical and human rights NGOs all had differing reasons for banning landmines, their landmine ban activities required coordination in order to achieve their common goal of a landmine ban. The medical NGOs targeted landmines because their field medical staffs complained that landmine injuries, on average, require more blood units and repeated surgical care than other munition injuries.⁷⁶ The extensive medical requirements that landmine injuries require, puts another burden on an already stretched medical infrastructure in many developing countries where landmines are present.⁷⁷ Human rights NGOs complained that since landmines are indiscriminate and in

proportionate to their military utility, they violate the international humanitarian legal rights of civilians.⁷⁸ Lastly, development and refugee NGOs complained that landmines negatively affect their ability to transport relief supplies into infested areas and that once the conflict settles, landmines are an impediment to refugee repatriation, state reconstruction and development.⁷⁹

The ICBL experienced differences among its members as is normal with large, diverse communities. To explain how the ICBL community was organized, we need to look at its origination. It developed through an exchange of information among NGOs operating in mine-infested states and looking for common way to solve the landmine problem. The cultivation of organizational and governmental contacts through conferences, face to face meetings and other informal forms of meetings, eventually brought them on board the ICBL's common theme: Ban Landmines. The common, yet specific goal, made the ICBL unique as compared to many other transnational movements that have a diverse agenda.

While this singular policy goal helped to keep the coalition from becoming too unwieldy and disparate, informational technologies greatly facilitated the ICBL's coordination. Coordination was extremely important in convincing states that there was a civil society movement afoot to ban landmines. Herein lies the key ICBL characteristic that differs it from other transnational movements - central coordination. In most social movements, an unwieldy coalition leads to policy fragmentation and begets instability.⁸⁰ In contrast, through person to person meetings and meetings a conference, and continual reinforcement by e-mail, web sites and group lists allowed ICBL members to develop into a relatively close-knit community. If these technologies were lacking, the ICBL's decentralized structure could have collapsed under mis-communication and coordination problems. These communications were central ICBL element because a range of groups from different countries and serving different organizational constituencies directed them. The ICBL leaders also believe that "the ease and speed of communication within the ICBL provided by e-mail clearly had a great impact on the ability of civil society organizations from diverse cultures to exchange information and develop integrated political strategies."⁸¹

Internal communications among ICBL members was regular and communicated by and through the co-ordinator, Jody Williams. Her regular communication provided NGO "members with a sense of the overall activities of the campaign," which "was key to the creation and maintenance of the momentum of the ICBL."⁸² Put otherwise, ICBL's utilization of inexpensive communication technologies was a good counterweight to fragmentation among members. According to the former USCBL coordinator, coordination was the key to the ICBL, and that the Internet was the "main organizing tool" for its "communications network."⁸³ That is not to say that there were not philosophical and personal divisions within the ICBL, because there were. The claim here is that these technologies favor NGO coalitions to coordinate among themselves at the international level vis a vis hierarchical power structures that does not require a "physical or formal institutional presence."⁸⁴ E-mail communications were especially crucial in "planning of major activities and conferences, such as those held in Cambodia in 1994 and Mozambique in 1997."⁸⁵ For example, the ICBL June 1995 Cambodia Conference was the first international landmine conference held in a landmine infested country and the first conference organized "primarily through e-mail."⁸⁶ The main point here is that Jody Williams and other ICBL leaders maintained the ICBL on a straight and clear path to accomplish its goal of banning landmines by utilizing the fax machine, and then later relying on e-mail communications to coordinate among the members.⁸⁷

C. Following Through on Commitments Serving at the center of the movement to ban landmines, the ICBL was the main drivers and coordinators of the strategy to ensure a comprehensive treaty. The utilization of e-mail lists by ICBL coordinators in Oslo also allowed them to communicate with numerous member NGOs, media and governmental officials in a quickly and efficient manner about the treaty's progress. More importantly, it allowed the ICBL to coordinate and direct action in many states in order to hold diplomats negotiating the treaty to commitments made by their governments.⁸⁸ In other words, it made state behavior at the conference more transparent. One result is that if states know their behavior is being observed, they are more likely to follow through on their commitments. A specific example of how ICBL members coordinated among themselves in response to the state landmine policies, were their activities during the 1997 Oslo Treaty signing conference in September. To ensure states abided by their commitments, ICBL activists at the Oslo conference used e-mail to communicate with national campaigns to contact and lobby their governments about certain critical issues and policies being discussed at the treaty negotiations. These campaigns, in turn, communicated back to the ICBL coordinators in Oslo with updates regarding their government positions.⁸⁹ For example, Australians lobbied their Government in Canberra, when informed by ICBL activists that they "heard the Australian delegation was supporting an effort to create a big loophole."⁹⁰

The implication is that various diplomatic and lobbying practices, such as vague commitments and double-speak, no longer hold and can be disaggregated by NGOs utilizing informational technologies. Furthermore, key NGO diplomatic and lobbying functions can be coordinated and performed in different geographical locations, thereby ensuring a

nearly universal monitor on governmental behavior. Put otherwise, the ICBL case evinces that the tyranny of diplomatic secrecy regarding information and challenging geographic barriers can be overcome through strategic utilization of these technologies.

C. Communication Opportunities Communications technologies also help build transparency and trust by providing increased access and opportunities to communicate directly with governments. Making it easier for NGOs and governments to communicate encourages cooperation and understanding. Building trust and transparency with governments via Internet communications however is difficult. E-mail communications from the ICBL to many governments was not emphasized for several reasons. First, many governments, especially those in the South, lacked e-mail technology. It was not just southern governments that lack that ability to communicate by e-mail as some governments in northern states did not have that capability either.⁹¹ Therefore, the ICBL lobbied via telephone, fax and personal visits.

Second, even if some governments had e-mail capability, their Internet systems were limited to internal or inter-governmental correspondence rather than external correspondence. The lack of capability to communicate with the ICBL could be due to a range of reasons. Some diplomats did not want to be accountable for their written correspondence via e-mail - which could then be disseminated to an activist subscriber network, while their governments discouraged outside e-mail correspondence for political and security reasons.⁹²

Third, some diplomats who had e-mail capability simply preferred telephone conversations and some minimal fax correspondence rather than utilizing e-mail. The diplomats may have been wary of communicating through such a public forum as the Internet and therefore wanted to narrow the range of prospective leaks and/or minimize their exposure. During the early stages of the campaign, when states were not rapidly endorsing the ban, some diplomats exhibited great courage and tenacity in bringing their own states on board. At times, some of these diplomats felt more kinship with the ban coalition forces than their own government.⁹³ These diplomats had the conviction and drive with acute sense of political responsibility toward banning landmines and therefore felt a moral obligation to the ICBL and other governmental personnel committed to banning landmines. The implication is that some diplomats may have wished to protect their views from their government's scrutiny and therefore conducted negotiations in a most secretive manner that is not conducive to communicating via networks. Moreover, there were many face to face meetings to discuss substantive issues that negated the need for substantive dialogue via e-mail. Most other issues could be handled by telephone or fax.⁹⁴

The Ottawa Process working group was not unwieldy, because it comprised a few state and ICBL negotiators, therefore also negating the need for intensive e-mail communications. The prelude to each of these conferences and meetings entailed "intensive telephone and fax diplomacy through which common objectives were established and tactical approaches developed.⁹⁵ Moreover, at these conferences and meetings, the ICBL had tremendous up front and agenda-setting input in addition to "a seat at the table as a full participant."⁹⁶

4. How states may control NGO use of informational technologies in their efforts against the campaign

Before the advent of the technological revolution, and economic and social interdependence, most governmental policies were largely immune from the influence of NGOs. However, while informational technologies had an effect at the international level and in Western states, for several reasons it was not as an important factor in the internal landmine politics of non-Democratic states and non-Western states. Put otherwise, informational technologies had a greater effect on the landmine policies of democratic states rather than non-democratic states. For several reasons, informational technologies had limited impact in the South. Perhaps the most important reason is that there is a lack of political pluralism in many non-democratic states, "lobbying groups aren't as prevalent."⁹⁷ Therefore, only the collective pressure brought by the ICBL as an international coalition and pro-ban states with economic and political influence in bilateral and multilateral lending agencies could influence the political leaders of these states.⁹⁸

Another factor hindering the effectiveness of informational technologies in the South was the language barrier among regional states and in the ICBL itself, whose main working language was English. Even among states in the same region, there were language barriers that hindered communications. In Africa, for example, regional cooperation utilizing informational communications was "slowed by language barriers that make landmine awareness campaigns both difficult and expensive."⁹⁹

Lastly, while "[a]dvances in technology may have broken the state's monopoly on information...the coercive potential of regime-sanctioned violence often undermines criticism and opposition."¹⁰⁰ Many non-democratic governments can take active measures to cut down on NGO utilization of informational technologies, even though they may not be able

to control Internet activity. Governmental security personnel "can seize computers or cut Web access. In 1999 the Chinese Government, for example, temporarily shut e-mail service at domestic Internet service companies in a clampdown on Falun Gong," a secretive religious sect.¹⁰¹

While communications technologies may not have the same significant impact in non-democratic states that they had in democratic states, this situation may no longer be sustainable. These technologies have been especially difficult for governments, whether democratic or non-democratic, to control. They may yet prove to be out of any government's control. Recently, Great Britain's intelligence service assess that "the Internet is so fast and so far-flung that no government can control the flow of information on the global network."¹⁰²

PART TWO: IMPLICATIONS

As communication technologies continue to develop and come on-line, and increasingly become available to the public, the result for international policymaking will be profound. This paper shows how informational technologies facilitated ICBL communications and reduced its networking costs. More these technologies also helped the ICBL maintain a unified and coordinated campaign and broadened it to more than seventy states. Understanding the ICBL utilization of informational technologies is important because highlights implications for international relations and future NGO coalitional efforts to address transnational issues. Furthermore, Landmines are a key policy problem, as they are the cause of many injuries and deaths in regional conflicts, hinder post-conflict reconstruction, seriously undermine infrastructure, and deny land to civilian use thereby leading to overuse of existing land.¹⁰³ Therefore, current NGO coalitional efforts to ban child soldiers, restrict small arms and light weapons, and ratify the international criminal court may be able to better utilize informational technologies based on the ICBL's experience. In particular, there are several implications that can be gleaned from the ICBL case: 1) Hierarchical disruption; 2) Larger and broader NGO coalitions addressing specific issues; and 3) Creation of international law.

A. Hierarchical Disruption One implication from the ICBL's use of communications technologies is that the rise in its influence relative to state power in creating and developing the Ottawa Treaty evinces that states need information and services that NGOs can provide. These technologies are allowing a "revolutionary control over information" to dominant international politics.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, governmental negotiators should learn to become team players with NGOs, rather than remain isolated in a state centric process. In a survey conducted the day after the treaty signing, a majority of governmental officials participating in the Ottawa Treaty negotiations felt that "the role of NGOs throughout the process as invaluable and atypical with respect to the high degree of NGO and government cooperation." ¹⁰⁵

The policy implication is that communication technologies can increase the transparency of governmental decision-making and behavior and open them up a better-informed public, which, could result in governments working with NGOs rather than trying to monopolize policymaking themselves. Importantly, "the information and communications revolution disrupts hierarchies by diffusing and redistributing power."¹⁰⁶ According to some international scholars, new transnational communications structures now better allows for NGOs to draw the attention of publics across borders. Such access to domestic populations has allowed NGOs to slowly diminish the primacy of the State - citizen relationship. Increasingly, governments must now contend with domestic public opinion "on matters that have traditionally been handled strictly between governments."¹⁰⁷

While scholarly work has shown how NGOs can make a difference in state policies on a range of international issues,¹⁰⁸ it has mostly been developed in the research programs investigating NGO influence in environmental politics. Paul Wapner, for example, has shown that during the 1980's, studies have shown that environmental NGOs have influenced international negotiations of the environmental protection of the oceans, the ozone layer and Antarctica.¹⁰⁹ NGOs also increased public pressure on governments to protect the global environment as evidenced from a poll taken in 1981, when "forty-five percent of those polled in an U.S. survey said that protecting the environment was so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high and continuing environmental improvements must be made regardless of cost; in 1990, 74 percent supported the statement."¹¹⁰ While the environmental issue is different from landmines, because the latter lies at the heart of state sovereignty - weapons, it shows that NGOs can have an effect on state behavior. These technologies gave the ICBL greater flexibility to change and address time-sensitive issues than governments because they were better able to mobilize and act quickly than governments. In an era of rapid political and technological change, it also gave the ICBL added strength in working with and against states. The Canadian diplomats leading the landmine ban negotiations and Ottawa Process also point out that the treaty evinces how NGOs can rapidly organize to address and solve issues, and that coupled with "the new tools of the Information Age" they are tremendously important in any state's diplomatic tool-kit.¹¹¹

B. Collective Voice Another implication that can be drawn from ICBL use of communications technologies is that it shows how NGOs and work together to speak with one voice. As communications technological continues, NGOs are more able to developed broader based coalitions. Especially important is that these technologies provide cheaper, easier and reliable communications between Northern and Southern based NGOs. The ICBL's ability to capitalize on developing information technologies to communicate and mobilize as one collective voice against landmine use made it a very effective international force. The ICBL model of mobilizing NGOs and working with small and mid-size states to ban landmines can form the basis for a new international "superpower."¹¹² One day after being awarded as co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Jody Williams stated that "[f]rom day day one we [the ICBL founding members] recognized that instant communications was critical....It made people feel they were part of it."¹¹³

Progress in this area will help increase NGO capabilities in the future to develop larger and universal coalitions. These technologies may result in a "fundamental transformation of the nature of politics," which, according to Juan Enriquez, a Harvard University expert on Latin America, generates "very tightly knit communities that are not geographically contiguous."¹¹⁴ The landmine case shows how informational technologies, especially E-mail and the Web, helped the ICBL reduce transnational coalition building costs and increased international media exposure. These technologies also help bridged the all too familiar north-south NGO divide that provide damaging to so many other NGO efforts, such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

C. Cross-Cultural Tool The landmine case also evinces new avenues by which communications technologies can be used to bridge geographical and cultural differences. This trend is likely to continue as more people look to the Internet as the primary source of their information and use it as one of their main communications tools. Already this change can be seen in the United States, where in 1996 "Republican Presidential candidate Bob Dole tried - with little success - to get voters to check out his web site" while in 1999 "45% of likely Republican primary voters with a computer say the Internet is 'the place they go for information' about politics."¹¹⁵ Recent gains in communications technologies have subsequently allowed international NGOs greater flexibility in conducting restricted one to one communication. This trend is expected to grow, especially to non-Western states. In Latin America, for example, there are currently "[s]ome 1 million people [that] have Web accounts, not including many who get free access. Latin American users are expected to grow to 19 million by 2003."¹¹⁶

In sum, coupling communications technologies with NGOs working co-operatively through coalitions, such as the ICBL, give them access to a broader audience thereby creating a more informed public. In sum, these technologies helped facilitate the ICBL in expertise in raising issues of international concern "and the organization of that expertise into networks of knowledge-based relations among the world's peoples."¹¹⁷

CONCLUSION

The arguments outlined in this paper address the broader question of agency in world politics by showing how communications technologies facilitated ICBL pressure on states to address the landmine issue in a particular way that eventually culminated in an international treaty banning landmines. This theoretical implication suggests that the landmine case illustrates how communications technologies helped the ICBL facilitate a landmine ban norm and translate it into a powerful instrument with lasting influence. Since explaining the role of informational technology in the ICBL's efforts to ban landmines provides a better understanding of the its role in propelling the emergence of the landmine ban norm, it provides a helpful theoretical framework for understanding the construction of new norms in other issue areas, such as humanitarian intervention, the use of force, and environmental issues. Moreover, it may also help predict the success or failure of current NGO efforts to create new norms, such as banning the use of child soldiers, restricting the use of small arms and light weapons, and ratifying the international criminal court. The broader implication of this study is that under certain conditions informational technologies can help NGOs contribute to creating international legal rules, which in turn can effect state behavioral changes.

The implication evinces how NGOs can utilize communications technologies to control, set the international political agenda, and sustain a broad international social movement toward reaching its goal. This case shows that the future of communications technologies influencing international politics has arrived. Today's international political arena is more interconnected through communications technologies, and therefore more affected by world transfers of information. This paper has provided an empirical analysis explaining ICBL's use of informational technologies in achieving its success.

In the future, these technologies will continue to play an important role in alleviating the effects of landmine use and, more importantly, helping to implement the Ottawa Treaty provisions. The United Nations, for example, is currently utilizing these technologies to ensure "the incorporation of data on mine awareness education and mine victim

assistance into the information management system for mine action (INSMA), on which UNMAS [United Nations Mine Action Service] is cooperating with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining."¹¹⁸ It is also working with UN agencies, such as World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, in developing "a comprehensive landmine injury data/surveillance system which will standardize information collection."¹¹⁹ Third, the United Nations is also using communications technology to coordinate "assessment missions and resource mobilization, and is responsible for information management and technical safety standards."¹²⁰ For example, the first draft of the "International Standards for Humanitarian Mine Clearance Operations" developed by an UN-led working group was placed on the Internet in September 1998.¹²¹ The importance of information, such as gathering, collating, evaluating, analyzing, and integrating information needs to be done effectively for it to help alleviate the mine problem. Informational management systems are critical to achieving this goal. The development of landmine informational management systems, however, has led to many opposing and over-lapping projects, organizational involvement and lack of coordination. Less than five months after the treaty signing in December 1997, for example, there were more twenty-eight informational databases in operation or under development, including six at the United Nations.¹²²

The ICBL model of utilizing communications technologies to strengthen the campaign provides a model that could be useful in current and future efforts at changing state behavior toward certain issues. For example, The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers is currently attempting to attach an optional protocol banning the recruitment of child soldiers to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹²³ Its website lists the steering group members from more than eleven states, provides a site location encouraging organizations to join the campaign, and offers links and database for further information.¹²⁴ The ICBL model also provides the basis for another effort, the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA),¹²⁵ which is concerned with restricting the proliferation of small arms.¹²⁶ The Campaign is composed of NGOs organized in the wake of the Ottawa Treaty signing. Its website provides action alerts directing supporters to express their concerns directly to particular governmental representatives through their e-mails, which are provided.¹²⁷ It also provides an opportunity to join the campaign, research further information about the campaign, and an area to read the latest campaign news.¹²⁸

The most significant aspect of the ICBL case, is that it shows how NGO coalitions can use communications technologies in order to increase their opportunities for success in changing state behavior. It highlights the importance how NGOs might be able to address security and social issues that states have thus far proven unable to manage. While a tremendous amount of financial and human resources went into producing the landmine ban, in the near future, there will be new issues whose effects will be similar to the humanitarian devastation caused by landmines but perhaps the international community is not willing to provide the required resources. Communications technologies have an important role to play in reducing costs associated with such campaigns and they may help NGOs had better organize themselves into a coherent and focused campaign. Also important is that they can help NGOs identify these issues earlier in the process so that they can be addressed before they become a major international problem. Moreover, if NGO coalitions are going to go to the excess every time of calling for changing state behavior, especially in the face of state opposition, then utilizing communications technologies is critical to bringing attention to the issue and then increasing public pressure on states to change, control, or stop their behavior.

The landmine case provides a prologue to future NGO attempts at changing state behavior in certain issue-areas. While e-mail and web-based communications technologies were not instrumental in launching the ICBL or its lobbying efforts during the early years, the ICBL increasingly relied on them as the campaign expanded to the south and as technologies developed to ensure reliable and cheaper communications. These technologies are now helping aid the ICBL in monitoring the treaty. Unique to the Ottawa Convention is an external effort by the ICBL to evaluate the international response to the landmine situation. Specifically, five NGO members of the ICBL are conducting the Landmine Monitor Program to help implement and enforce the treaty's provisions.¹²⁹ This program is the first systemic effort by NGOs to monitor and report state compliance with an arms control and international law convention.¹³⁰ One of its goals is to make available a continuous flow of high-quality research and analysis on state landmine activities and policies in order to monitor the implementation of the treaty. The Landmine Monitor information is available on-line through the ICBL web site.¹³¹ One can read the executive summary, and full and country reports. Moreover, the since the program is on-going, it is also recruiting researchers through the web site.

In sum, the role of communications technologies in future international NGO coalitions will be more important than they were in the landmine case. While communications technologies continue to be important to the ICBL, the Internet based communications technologies were not emphasized until much later in the campaign. This tardiness was primarily due to Internet technologies just becoming available to the public and, most important, many governments and NGOs were not yet prepared logistically to communicate through the Internet. Furthermore, some governments were also not yet comfortable or willing to use the Internet to communicate with external parties, such as the ICBL and its members. Instead, personal lobbying, through face to face meetings and telephone calls, proved essential in

initiating and establishing productive relationships among many NGOs and state governments. Subsequently, communications technologies significantly contributed to reducing a range of communications coalitional building costs, especially with southern NGOs. Finally, the ICBL's use of communications technologies greatly facilitated member coordination and governmental confidence building during the landmine campaign and in attempting to implement the treaty's provisions.

ENDNOTES

1 Officially known as The Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

2 The Campaign consists of over 1000 arms control, development, environmental, humanitarian, human rights, medical and religious NGOs representing some 70 countries.

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5 These weapons include biological, chemical and laser weapons, bullets weighing less than 400 milligrams, and dum dum bullets.

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