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Newsletter

February 2016

Important updates - Global Campaign on Military Spending



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Global Day of Action on Military Spending (GDAMS) 2016

This year's **Global Day** will in fact be a fortnight! Instead of a single day it will take place over the period **April 5** (publication of 2015 military expenditure data) to **April 18** (Tax Day in USA). Actions are planned in many countries. This is important in a context of rising tensions between major powers - which also involves smaller nations. Peace movement and other civil society voices urgently need to be heard, especially in a period of elections in several states. Among the themes to be highlighted by IPB is the need to 'move the money' to help fund humanitarian projects. Given the refugee crisis currently unfolding, this hardly needs much explanation. The issue is important also because financing will be a key theme at the upcoming **World Humanitarian Summit** (Istanbul, May 23-24).

World Congress, Berlin: *Disarm! for a Climate of Peace*

Several new partners have come forward in the last few weeks to help us plan the **World Congress** on militarisation to be held in Berlin from Sept 30 to Oct 3. Among the trade unions there are ITUC, UNI and Ver.di. Among environmentalists, we have Friends of the Earth International. In the religious field, we have Pax Christi International and the Muslim Peace Fellowship. See full list at the website. A first draft of the congress programme will be published in the coming days. A youth 'track' is being developed. Meanwhile several Preppcomms are in the making, and those in Barcelona, Tokyo and Leeds already took place. This is an exciting process and we welcome your contributions and suggestions. Registration is already open!

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Military Spending



NATO plans biggest build-up against Russia since the Cold War

Backed by an increase in U.S. military spending, NATO is planning its biggest build-up in Eastern Europe since the Cold War to deter Russia, but will reject Polish demands for permanent bases. Worried since Russia's seizure of Crimea that Moscow could rapidly invade Poland or the Baltic states, the Western military alliance wants to bolster defenses on its eastern flank without provoking the Kremlin by stationing large forces permanently. NATO defense ministers will begin outlining plans for a complex web of small eastern outposts and warehoused equipment ready for a rapid response force, with troops on rotation and war games held regularly. The rapid response force includes air, maritime and special operations units of up to 40,000 personnel. **The Obama administration's final Pentagon budget calls for quadrupling spending on efforts to counter Russia.**

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Russia could cut defense procurement spending: sources

The Russian government is considering a 5 percent cut in defense procurement spending this year, sources say, showing not even Vladimir Putin's plan to restore Moscow's military might is immune to the pain of a slowing economy. The president has made beefing up the military a national priority, and the fact it is up for discussion is a sign that no area is safe from budget cuts as Russia begins a second year of recession following a fall in oil prices and Western sanctions. The proposal is backed by the Finance Ministry and has the support of several other ministries and state institutions, enough for it to be put forward for discussion at a cabinet meeting, four official sources said. A 5 percent cut in defense procurement spending would save the government no more than 100 billion roubles (\$1.29 billion), according to an estimate by one official. "But this is not about money, it is about a political precedent," the official said. If approved, the 5 percent cut would be the biggest in defense spending under Putin. In 2011, while Prime Minister, he announced plans to revitalize the Russian army and its aging equipment by spending 23 trillion roubles by 2020.

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More on Military Spending

US Army budget boosts European presence, sacrifices modernization

Military spending, arms production and transfers. Compendium 2015

What Obama's Air Force budget request says about the future of warfare

Administration's proposed nuclear warhead budget its highest yet

Fear of Russian aggression drives increase in European defense spending

Voices against banca armada

Nuclear



Open Ended Working Group gets under way in Geneva

It is a case of Great Expectations...many NGOs have welcomed the establishment by the UN General Assembly of the **Open-Ended Working Group**, whose task is to "address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that would need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons".

States met in late February to begin the process, and there will be 2 more rounds before it closes in late August. Many resources are available for those wishing to follow the discussions, including a **60pp background paper** and regular commentaries by **Reaching Critical Will** and **Unfold Zero**, among others.

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Trident vote to be delayed by David Cameron until after EU referendum

Whitehall sources say Prime Minister David Cameron is prepared to wait to seek national consensus over £31bn nuclear deterrent renewal. The Prime Minister is to delay holding a parliamentary vote on renewing the Trident nuclear weapons programme until after a referendum on Britain's EU membership. The Prime Minister believes the referendum campaign will complicate efforts to build a strong national consensus over the £31bn renewal of the nuclear deterrent. There had been an expectation that the "maingate" vote to approve the Successor generation of four nuclear submarines would be held in March. But it will be delayed until at least July if the **EU referendum** is held on the Prime Minister's preferred date of 23 June.

Trident sits at the heart of a more complicated puzzle – what we might call the British Question – and embodies many of the crises and anxieties that have afflicted the UK since the second world war.

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More on Nuclear Weapons

The pentagon is ready to begin sweeping nuclear modernization. Can it afford to do it? Can it afford not to?

The Pentagon budget is out-of-control

Modernizing the opportunities for nuclear war

20th anniversary of Test Ban Treaty: scientists symposium

Protests at Büchel (Ger) on 26 March to 9 August 2016 and AWE Burghfield (UK) throughout June 2016

Arms Trade



SIPRI Report: World crises driving international arms trade

The peace research institute SIPRI has provided new data relating to the international arms trade. Over the last 5 years the biggest exporter is the US, well ahead of Russia. The main customers are in Asia and the Middle East. On 12 February the Russian Prime Minister, Dmitry Medvedev, said at the Munich Security Conference that in his view the world was experiencing a new Cold War. 'Hot' wars are already being waged in Ukraine and, in particular, in the Middle East. In East Asia, China's aggressive behavior is worrying its neighbors, while in South Asia relations between the rivals India and Pakistan remain extremely tense. At the same time, there is growing international insecurity because of the increased terrorist threat. The extremely tense global security situation is mirrored in the flourishing arms trade.

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European Parliament votes for EU-wide arms export embargo against Saudi Arabia

The European Parliament has voted in favor of an EU-wide embargo on selling arms to Saudi Arabia. A resolution calling for a ban on all weapons sales to the country was passed by 359 votes to 212, with 31 MEPs abstaining. The non-binding motion calls on member states to stop selling weapons to the country, which is currently conducting a widely-criticized military operation in neighboring Yemen marked by high civilian casualties. Saudi Arabia is intervening in Yemen to fight Houthi rebels, who control the country's capital but are not internationally recognized as its government. Criticism of the country's military operation have however included the bombing of multiple hospitals run by the charity Médecins Sans Frontières and the deaths of thousands of civilians, including 130 at a single wedding.

See also: [Campaigners urge States to stop selling billions of dollars in weapons to Saudi Arabia](#)

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More on Arms Trade

[France doubles arms sales in 2015](#)

Impacts



French President: Pacific nuclear tests impacted environment

French President Francois Hollande has acknowledged that nuclear weapons tests carried out in French territories in the South Pacific had consequences for the environment and the health of residents. Hollande, visiting French Polynesia, praised the region's contribution to France's role as one of the world's few nuclear powers. His remarks were aired on French television on 23 February. He pledged to review efforts to compensate people who suffered because of the tests. Bowing to decades of pressure, the government offered millions of Euros in 2010 in compensation for the government's 201 nuclear tests in the South Pacific and Algeria from 1960-1996. But the process is painstaking and many have still not received compensation. Victims groups welcomed Hollande's statements but said it remains unclear what that will mean in practice.

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American casualties of the U.S. nuclear weapons program

When Americans think about nuclear weapons, they comfort themselves with the thought that vast, nuclear destruction of human life has not taken place since 1945 -- at least not yet. But, in reality, nuclear weapon-related destruction *has* taken place, with shocking levels of U.S. casualties. This point is borne out by a recently-published **study** by a team of investigative journalists at McClatchy News. Drawing upon millions of government records and large numbers of interviews, they concluded that employment in the nation's nuclear weapons plants since 1945 led to 107,394 American workers contracting cancer and other serious diseases. Of these people, some 53,000, judged by government officials to have experienced excessive radiation on the job, received \$12 billion in compensation under the federal government's Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program. And 33,480 of these workers have died.

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Miscellaneous



The U.S. has an empire of bases in the Middle East — and It's not making anyone safer

The New York Times has revealed that the Obama administration is considering a Pentagon proposal to create a “new” and “enduring” system of military bases around the Middle East. This comes thirty-six years into the U.S. base build-up that stretches through the Greater Middle East, where military force has failed as a strategy for controlling the region, or for defeating terrorist organizations. This plan is being presented as a response to the rise of the Islamic State and other militant groups.

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In memoriam : Andreas Büro

IPB Co-President Reiner Braun writes: A large peace heart has ceased to beat. Andreas Büro, one of the mentors of the German peace movement, has passed away at the age of 87. He was active in the peace movement for the last 50 years, with the Easter marches being associated with his name since their inception, and countless large and small actions. He was a leader in the large demonstrations of the 1980s and was active until his death in the peace initiatives of Taunus, his home town. His scientific work, theoretical considerations and his practical work influenced diverse peace movements of very different political and social tendencies. An undogmatic leftist (his own description) and a person of great charisma, he worked on many inspirational initiatives to promote civilian conflict resolution. The relevant dossiers of Cooperation for Peace (German umbrella group) will be linked forever with his name. Until recently, he was developing ideas for a peaceful solution via the project: *'Ukraine: a bridge between East and West'* which was a campaign for cooperation, and one of the last projects he pursued. He will forever be remembered as a man of good conversation, togetherness and mutual learning. He will be sorely missed. We shall have to continue the work without him, but in his spirit.

[More Miscellaneous](#)

[Blog: We need to define “the environment” to](#)

[protect it from armed conflict](#)

Resources



Peace Review : Call for submissions
Symposium: The path to a world free of nuclear weapons

Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice, a quarterly journal published by Taylor & Francis/Routledge, will under the guest editorship of David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, dedicate part of upcoming **issue 28(3)** to examine “The Path to a World Free of Nuclear Weapons”. Is a world without nuclear weapons attainable and, if so, what will be required to create such a world? What obstacles will need to be overcome? This theme can be explored from a variety of perspectives – legal, moral, organizational, political, economic, as well as from the perspectives of psychology, sociology, anthropology, and various forms of security (national, international, global, and human security).

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New IPPNW/Small Arms Survey paper - hospital data and armed violence in Liberia

Results of hospital-based research in Liberia on armed violence spearheaded by members of IPPNW was published recently by the Small Arms Survey. A main finding of **The Value of Hospital Data – Understanding and Preventing Intentional Injury in Liberia** was that the Liberian Armed Violence Observatory (LAVO) is not receiving all the data it needs to most effectively inform intervention strategies on armed violence prevention. IPPNW doctors spent several weeks at two hospitals in Liberia’s capital, Monrovia, reviewing and documenting medical records of patients suffering intentional injuries. The goal was to assess the completeness of the data supplied to LAVO from hospitals. They worked closely with local Liberian medical colleagues and with **Action on Armed Violence**, which established LAVO in 2011, on accessing the data and on logistics.

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More Resources

"Peace in Progress" issue on bombed cities

For upcoming events see IPB Calender



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