



IPB News

WWW: Working for a World Without War

International Peace Bureau

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Disarmament for Development programme

In 2005 IPB launched a major new programme, designed to reflect widespread public concern at the rapid rise in global military spending (totalling \$1339 billion in 2007); and the evidence that weapons -- such as small arms, cluster bombs, landmines -- seriously impede sustainable development. Post 9-11, the failure of military solutions should be obvious to all. IPB advocates reductions in defence budgets and the adoption of a 'human security' approach. Activities organised in pursuit of these goals include: seminars, publications, website, e-newsletter, exhibitions and a media programme. National and international networks are gradually being developed.

Warfare or Welfare? Disarmament for Peace & Development Conference in Bangalore, February 10-12

IPB will be represented at this three day event which includes a series of workshops on the global arms trade and human security issues, as well as peace to protest against the Aero India Defence Fair, which is expected to bring to Bangalore some 600 armament companies. Find [here](#) the full programme of the conference.

\$ 12 trillions of lost opportunity cost due to conflicts in the Middle East

In a study launched last week, the [Strategic Foresight Group](#) has assessed the military, environmental, social, political, diplomatic, psychological and other costs of conflicts in the whole region since the Madrid Conference of 1991. It also seeks to highlight the benefits of a potential peace for the Middle East countries (from Egypt to Iran), whose average annual growth would reach 8%. Commentators are divided over the impact such report could have on political decisions, but we can certainly assume it will help parties, directly or indirectly involved in the conflict, to realize the resources they waste in pursuing destructive strategies and what they could gain through peaceful solutions.

Billions of dollars of aid will be immediately needed for reconstruction in Gaza, the UN [said](#). Since 1994, donors have spent some \$ 13 billion in aid, according to the head of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, to rebuild the Gaza Strip again and again.

- Much of the reconstruction costs will be met by donations from Arab countries. Saudi King Abdullah has pledged \$1 billion toward rebuilding Gaza. More on this issue [here](#).

Bolivia's new "peace" Constitution finally adopted

In a referendum on Sat. 25th, some 60% of the population of Bolivia have approved the new Constitution drafted a year ago but rejected in four regions lead by conservatives. Besides making key reforms in indigenous rights, land ownership, regional autonomy and the judiciary system, **Article 10** of the text states that Bolivia is a pacifist state, which promotes the culture of and right to peace, as well as cooperation between peoples of the region and the world, in order to contribute to mutual understanding and equitable development. It further rejects wars of aggression as means to solve international conflicts and (like the recently adopted Constitution of Ecuador) bans foreign military bases. Find the full text in Spanish [here](#).

Military vs. social spending

Putin against upping military spending to detriment of social programs

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said militarization was not a cure-all for the economic crisis. "Initially, it would certainly lead to the creation of new jobs... Probably, in the short term, this measure would have some effect, but in reality, militarization does not help resolve problems, but only drives them deeper, squeezing from the economy huge financial and material resources for which a far better use could be found," he said. Putin said Russia intended to work actively on disarmament. "We are set for active work on disarmament problems," he said. "A reasonable restraint in military expenditure, along with the strengthening of global security, would also certainly bring solid economic dividends," the premier said, adding that he hoped this point of view would prevail in the world. Full report by [RIA Novosti](#).

US: "Defense doesn't need stimulus"

"As the Obama administration and Congress move forward with a multifaceted economic-stimulus package with a price tag of hundreds of billions of dollars, yet another interest group has staked its claim to a share of those funds -- the nation's defense contractors. Plans to add tens of thousands of personnel to our armed forces will have a similar distorting effect. The resulting payroll increases will come at a high price to taxpayers and to our long-term security. As the war in Iraq winds down, there is no obvious reason to increase the size of our military, especially since we shouldn't be planning to fight more Iraq-style wars," [explains](#) the weapons and security expert William Hartung.

China fears containment as defense spending rises

China fears containment abroad and separatist groups at home, a defense policy paper said on Jan. 27th, justifying a drive to increase military spending and push the People's Liberation Army into the high-tech era. China's security has been improving as its economy grows and the PLA embraces modernization, the defense "white paper" said, but pro-independence forces in Taiwan, Tibet and the energy-rich western region of Xinjiang still "pose threats to China's unity and security."

Beijing says its defense budget is purely for defensive purposes and much smaller than the Pentagon's. Experts estimate China's true defense spending could be as much as triple the stated figure. [Read full report...](#)

Weapons and their effects

Norway: Cluster weapons manufacturer Textron excluded from the Government Pension Fund

Based on a recommendation from the Council on Ethics for the Government Pension Fund - Global, the Ministry of Finance has excluded the American company Textron Inc. Corporation from the Fund. "The company produces cluster weapons, which are banned pursuant to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We cannot participate in the funding of this type of production," says finance minister Kristin Halvorsen. Full [report](#).

Liberia: War wounds left to fester

Five years after the end of the war in Liberia, many of the hundreds of thousands of injured survivors say they are still suffering from physical wounds that were never properly treated.

While funding for basic healthcare is nearly on target, funds to bridge the "astonishing scarcity of doctors and health workers" and to set up training facilities in clinics, medical universities and teaching hospitals remains outside this figure. [Read on...](#)

US army suicides hit record high

The rate of suicides among soldiers in the US army has risen to a record level for the second year in a row. The army said there were 128 confirmed suicides in 2008, with a further 15 deaths still under investigation. Military officials said they did not know why the number has kept increasing but that the stress of conflicts overseas had had a significant impact. Full BBC [article](#).

US defense department establishes civilian expeditionary workforce

The Defense Department is forming a civilian expeditionary workforce that will be trained and equipped to deploy overseas in support of military missions worldwide, according to department officials. Full story [here](#).

Weapons of Mass Destruction

British Generals say the UK's nuclear deterrent should be scrapped

The UK's nuclear deterrent should be scrapped, according to a group of retired senior military officers, who wrote a letter to the Times, denouncing the UK's Trident system as "irrelevant". They write: "Nuclear weapons have shown themselves to be completely useless as a deterrent to the threats and scale of the violence we currently face, or are likely to face - particularly international terrorism." [Read on...](#)

Another retired NATO military makes a similar call. [More](#) from the BBC.

Germany takes up UK anti-nuclear campaign

Top-level German political figures, including a former German chancellor, have taken up a UK initiative to restart international nuclear disarmament.

The initiative began when a collection of former foreign and defence secretaries, including Malcolm Rifkind, Douglas Hurd, David Owen and George Robertson, wrote an article arguing "there is a powerful case for a dramatic reduction in the stockpile of nuclear weapons". The resurgent anti-nuclear campaign is one of many single issue campaigns hoping an Obama administration will be more sympathetic to its views. [Read on...](#)

Nobel Prize Laureates urge Obama to pursue disarmament

On Jan. 20th, twelve Nobel Prize Laureates (including IPB) and a former Under-Secretary General of the United Nations addressed US President Barack Obama. In an open letter they remind President Obama of his promise to seek a world in which there are no nuclear weapons.

Pointing to the shortfalls of the existing international regime for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, Sir Harold Kroto (Nobel Prize for Chemistry) and his co-signers remind Barack Obama of the recent suggestion by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to use the existing Model Nuclear Weapons Convention as a starting point for the path into a nuclear weapons free world. [Read the open letter...](#)

Ban Ki-Moon urges Conference on Disarmament to act on his five-point plan

UN Secretary General urged the Conference on Disarmament to move quickly towards "practical negotiations that will lead to real disarmament", adopting his five-point plan for nuclear disarmament. [Full statement.](#)

Other news

IPB Vice President granted Peace Award

Alyn Ware, IPB Vice President and Global Coordinator of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament has been granted the Loxley Award by Quaker Peace and Service to provide funding for his research on political possibilities for nuclear disarmament, based on initiatives by the Costa Rican government in recent years. [Read more...](#)

In Memoriam: Douglas Holdstock (medicine + war, UK)

Douglas Holdstock, who has died aged 75, was a dedicated worker for peace, all the more so because he was a scientist who understood the implications of nuclear weapons. In 1989 he took a petition to No 10 Downing St. protesting against cuts in the service due to lack of money, while at the same time the government, under Margaret Thatcher, was commissioning and building the Trident nuclear programme.

He was also one of the founding fathers of the World Court Project UK (WCP), which asked the nations of the UN to approach the international court of justice for an opinion on the current legality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons. He had been an internationalist, an environmentalist and a pacifist since his schooldays at Reigate grammar school.

[Read obituary...](#)

Russia 'halts missile deployment'

Russia's military has announced it will halt its plans to deploy short-range missiles in its Baltic enclave, in connection with the fact that the new US administration is not rushing through plans to deploy parts of its missile defence shield in eastern Europe. Full BBC [report](#).

Resources

Advocacy Package on the Missile Defence System

This [package](#) prepared by Pax Christi International contains an overview about the history of the Missile Defence System and detailed information about the situation in the Czech Republic. It also provides plenty of concrete tips for your organisation's advocacy work.

The Military Balance 2009 is out

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) launched on Tue. 27 its annual study assessing the military capabilities and defence economics of 170 countries. Find [here](#) a press release and the executive summary.

- AFP has developed, based on this report, a useful and interactive chart of military spending, giving the average spending by inhabitants for big regions and countries over past three years. Available [here](#) in French.

Updated Abolition 2000 website up and running

The Rideau Institute has revamped and updated the Abolition 2000 website. to make it more interactive, add new features and allow the comments on new postings: www.abolition2000.org. IPB is a founding member of the Abolition 2000 network.

Newsletters

IPB receives many e-newsletters, both from our members and non-member organisations. Click [here](#) for a list with hyperlinks. Also, to review IPB's past newsletters, please visit [this link](#).

Calendar

Click [here](#) for IPB's international events calendar. For disarmament events, go to the comprehensive Disarmament Calendars of UN and other inter-governmental, grassroots and civil society events in key cities compiled by the [Geneva Forum](#) and by [Reaching Critical Will](#).

Message to IPB members: if you have reports of activities that are relevant to this newsletter please email them to the Secretariat.

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