



IPB News

WWW: Working for a World Without War

International Peace Bureau

February 19th 2009 edition

IPB Annual Conference – Washington D.C., Nov 13-15, 2009

As the new U.S. administration has revived the hope of peace activists inside and outside the USA, this conference will be a great opportunity to intensify partnerships, share views and lobby decision makers on the theme: Rolling back militarism: a task for the global movement. The programme will include a central event and additional activities depending on the wishes of partners and participants. But it is still open so suggestions are welcome. Click [here](#) for more.

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.

Bangalore Conference on DforD - conference report and IPB message

Some 200 participants turned out to the 3-days conference and protest against the Aero India Defence Fair. The conference concluded by calling for an Arms Trade Treaty and for access to social security in India. Read a [report](#) by the IPB representative at the conference and the [message of the Secretary General](#).

Yes we can switch from a war to a peace economy!

United for Peace and Justice, a coalition of over a thousand anti-war and social change groups in the USA launched an ambitious campaign to call for a new set of national priorities on the eve of the presidential inauguration. Under the slogan "**Beyond war, a new economy is possible: Yes we can!**" this campaign draws inspiration from Dr. M-L. King's "Beyond Vietnam" speech, denouncing the connection between poverty, racism and war. A massive mobilisation is scheduled on April 4th in New York, but the aim is to build a large movement linking the call to end wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with calls to solve the economic crisis by cutting dramatically military spending and invest in the civilian sector.

Various campaigning materials and analysis are already available, and more will be added at: unitedforpeace.org. Designed mainly for the US context, they can also serve as model for similar campaigns elsewhere.

The Risk of Military Keynesianism

Foreign Policy in Focus' John Feffer portrays the ambitions of US legislators to route economic aid funds to military manufacturers and how this is connected to the real threat of a new arms race, especially in the Asian-Pacific Region.

Feffer also supports the [Pacific Freeze](#), calling on governments in the Six Party Talks - the United States, Japan, China, Russia, South Korea, and North Korea - to freeze their military spending and then reduce their budgets on an equitable basis as a first step towards demilitarization and development.

[Read the full article](#). More info on the Pacific Freeze below.

Asia-Pacific Freeze Campaign: A Call for a Safer, Greener Future

In Northeast Asia, where the largest militaries in the world confront each other, people call on their governments (US, Russia, China, Japan, South and North Korea) to freeze military spending and then reduce the budgets in order to invest in human security. Find and sign the petition [online](#) (available in English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean).

Can Robert Gates tame the Pentagon?

Time Magazine portrays current US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' history of making pragmatic cuts in military spending and how he opts for a 'smart spending' policy among economic recession and astronomic spending requests from the Air Force, Navy and Army.

While Gates is hardly a disarmament advocate, the article is a very interesting read to get a picture of what current projects are and how spending decisions are made in the US military. Read it [here](#).

Petition Calling for Obama to Slash Military Budget

Green Change has a petition circulating calling for Barack Obama to slash the military budget and invest the money in education, health care, green energy and mortgage security. Sign the Secure Green Future petition to President-elect Obama [here](#).

President of Brazil Unveils Plan to Upgrade Military

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil unveiled a new national defense strategy on Dec 18, calling for upgrading the military forces and remaking the defense industry. The plan also called for a debate in Brazil on whether mandatory military service should be enforced and how the armed forces should be professionalized. [Read more](#).

The Troop Surge in Afghanistan

Obama commits 17,000 more US troops to Afghanistan

The initial Guardian report about the situation in Afghanistan, the tense climate within the coalition and the likely effects of the troop surge can be found [here](#).

Obama's Afghan Trap

Amy Goodman, the host of "Democracy Now" analyzes the recent bombings along the Afghan-Pakistani border and the new efforts of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to shift the US agenda from democracy-building towards more aggressive counterinsurgency operations. Read [here](#).

More Troops, More Worries, Less Consensus

Jim Lobe analyzes the internal debate in the US administration and legislation about the status, future and fundamental goals of the war in Afghanistan. Read [here](#).

Obama's Vietnam

Based on the somewhat overused Vietnam comparison, Newsweek delivers a five-page, in-depth report on the history and current situation of the war in Afghanistan. Read [here](#).

Weapons and their effects

US officials unable to account for weapons in Afghanistan that might go to Taliban

Tens of thousands of assault rifles and other firearms in Afghanistan are at risk of being stolen because U.S. officials have lost track of them, according to a congressionally ordered audit that warns that some weapons may already be in Taliban hands. The report concluded that U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan had basically ignored their mandate to ensure the "accountability, control and physical security" of the arms given to Afghan forces under the \$11.7 billion aid program, and in particular had neglected to record the weapons' serial numbers so that they could be monitored.

Full report [here](#).

67 mainstream groups ask Obama to review US cluster bomb and landmine policy

Leaders of humanitarian, faith, medical and veterans groups sent on Feb. 10th a [letter](#), requesting the new administration to reconsider the standout position regarding the two treaties banning landmines and cluster bombs. "Reconsidering these two treaties—and eliminating the threat that U.S. forces might use weapons that most of the world has condemned—would greatly aid efforts to reassert our nation's moral leadership." wrote the authors.

UK Co-operative Bank ceases all investment in Depleted Uranium weapon manufacturers

Co-op becomes the first UK bank to cease investments in DU weapon manufacturers, classifying uranium weapons along with cluster bombs as indiscriminate. [Read more...](#)

Nuclear Weapons

New opportunities for parliamentary action on nuclear disarmament

In its latest newsletter, the global network Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament analyzes recent developments such as Ban Ki-Moon's landmark speech on deterrence and nuclear disarmament and President Obama's plans for reductions of US and Russian stockpiles and points to key opportunities for parliamentary action on nuclear disarmament in the near future, such as the upcoming summit of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Read [here](#).

Victory: \$1 billion for nuclear weapons complex removed from economic stimulus plan

In a very effective and ultimately successful civil society organizing effort, Peace Action West called on citizens to get in touch with their representatives and advocate the removal of proposed funds for nuclear weapons research and manufacturing from the money allocated under the economic stimulus plan. Read [more...](#)

Other news

Kyrgyzstan moves to shut US air base near Afghanistan

Kyrgyzstan's government has submitted a decree to parliament for the closure of a key US air base in the Central Asian state, Kyrgyz officials say. The air base supports US and NATO operations in Afghanistan and is the only US base in Central Asia, thus its closure would be a major blow for those operations. The move was prompted by popular opposition to the base, Kyrgyz officials stated. However, the failure to reach an agreement on financial aid with the US while receiving an offer for an aid package of \$2bn from Russia is believed to be a contributing factor in the decision. Read [full story...](#)

Leading Jurists Call for Urgent Steps to Restore Human Rights in efforts to counter terrorism

In one of the most extensive studies of counter-terrorism and human rights yet undertaken, an independent panel of eminent judges and lawyers presented alarming findings about the impact of counter-terrorism policies worldwide and called for remedial action on Feb 16th. The Eminent Jurists Panel on Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights, established by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), has based its report "Assessing Damage, Urging Action" on sixteen hearings covering more than forty countries in all regions of the world and was "shocked" by the "hasty responses" of governments that "have undermined cherished values" and pose a "serious threat to the international human rights legal framework". Read the [report...](#)

No to war - No to NATO, and Yes to democracy - Yes to the right to demonstrate

500 people from 19 countries met in Strasbourg, on 14-15 Feb. to prepare the activities of the counter-summit on NATO's 60th anniversary which will be held in Strasbourg in April 1-5. [Full communiqué](#) with schedule of activities.

Disarmament Decade initiative + talk of a UN Disarmament Day

The UN Disarmament Commission will meet in New York April 13 to May 1, 2009. On its agenda is the preparation of elements of a declaration of the 2010s as the 4th Decade for Disarmament, to be submitted to the UN General Assembly in the fall 2009 session. Mayors for Peace supports this initiative as it fits with its [2020 vision campaign](#), and other NGOs' support is welcome.

The idea of a UN Disarmament Day, perhaps on January 24th, (when the UNGA adopted its first resolution in 1946 calling for work towards elimination of WMD) is also progressing, and it could possibly be established together in connection with the Decade for Disarmament. Find [here](#) background materials on the Disarmament Commission.

US Arms Trade and Taiwan

If the new President is serious about diplomacy, argues James Carter, he needs to cut back the huge number of weapons that the United States is dumping on the world market, taking a look at the negative effects of Washington's recent sale of \$6.5 billion in arms to Taiwan. Beijing referred to the deal as a "violation" of established principles that would cause "serious harm to the China-U.S. relations as well as to peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits."

Read [full article](#)...

Resources

New book: *Lessons from Iraq, Avoiding the Next War*

An indispensable collection of short essays by prominent figures such as Hans Blix and Joseph Stiglitz, explaining the purposes, the ways and means, and the collateral damage of what you are kindly asked to believe is a "war for peace". More on this book edited by M. Pemberton and W. Hartung at the New America Foundation's [website](#).

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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Newsletter edited by: Jacob Romer – Jacob@ipb.org &

Frederic Durand – frederic@ipb.org

International Peace Bureau, 41 Rue de Zurich, 1201 Geneva, Switzerland

Tel: + 41 22 731 6429 / Fax + 41 22 738 9419

www.ipb.org