



April 3, 2009

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.

NEWS

New Project Studies Impact of DRC War on Ecology

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) is conducting 14 projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to evaluate the ecological impact of the wars in the area. Although there are currently three international treaties which prohibit environmental crimes, according to Michael Bouchard, a University of Montreal professor participating in UNEP's program, these treaties are "not restrictive and lack precision". In the DRC, fighting in the Great Lakes Region, which contains 60% of the African continent's biodiversity, threatens the last 700 mountain gorillas which are on the verge of extinction. Read more [here](#).

Increasing U.S. Presence in Afghanistan: UFPJ Call to Action Against Second Longest American War

In a recent opinion piece, William Rivers Pitt, laments the US dominated offensive in Afghanistan and President Obama's recent promise to increase troop numbers. Rivers Pitt points out that the US's war in Afghanistan has lasted longer than any other war in US history, the only exception being the war of the American

Revolution. Also, he states that with the arrival of the 21,000 additional troops promised by President Barack Obama, the US will have almost three times as many troops as any other NATO member. [Read the full article](#). As President Obama announced his plan to send additional troops to Afghanistan the US coalition, United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ), has issued a call to action, asking people to call the White House comment line, join their April 4th demonstration in New York City, and take local action to protest the decision. UFPJ advocates for the withdrawal of all troops from Afghanistan and the opening of diplomatic negotiations. Also, they call for the US to shift from military spending to funding for Afghan-led humanitarian community development and reconstruction projects. Find out more about how to get involved on the [UFPJ website](#).

Military Spending

Military Balance 2009: Global Downturn to Lead to Defence Cuts?

On January 27th, the International Institute for Strategic Studies Military Balance, released [The Military Balance 2009](#), its annual assessment of the military capabilities and defence economics of 170 countries around the world. William Maclean, in a recent Reuters article, points to the report and other sources which identify the possibility of defence spending cuts due to the global economic downturn. The traditionally conservative Institute stated in its 2009 report that "defense spending seems bound to come under close scrutiny" by governments around the world hit by recession. [Read more](#).

China To Increase Military Spending By 14.9% This Year

According to the BBC, China will increase military spending to 480.6 billion Yuan (\$70.2 billion USD), which will pay for modernization, better salaries, and "capacity building programmes" including counter-terrorism and disaster relief. Some analysts say that defence spending is actually higher than the officially presented figure although government sources deny the existence of hidden outlays. Read more about [China's increasing military budget](#). The Office of the US Secretary of Defence recently released a [report](#) detailing the current and future military strategy of the People's Republic of China. The report addresses the current and probable future course of military-technological developments as well as the probable development of military, security, and grand strategy though the next 20 years. Chinese officials argue that the report, which questions the transparency of Chinese military spending and states that the country is developing "disruptive military technologies", contains a "gross distortion of the facts". To read more about the report and China's reaction to it, please click [here](#).

Australian Government Plans Will Scale Back Promised Defence Spending

Courier Mail reports that the Australian Government is planning to scale back its once promised yearly 3% defence spending increase. Last year, the Rudd Government agreed to continue the policy of an annual 3% increase until 2017 but with the economic crisis this is expected to be scaled back to a more modest increase of around 1%. It is estimated that this will save about \$1 billion over the next two years. In addition, the Defence Department will likely be asked to find savings by abandoning some of its larger scale military projects, making cuts to personnel and supplier costs, as well as cutting funding to its Sky Marshal program which provides undercover armed security agents on random flights in and out of Australia. Since September 11, 2001 defence spending has jumped from \$13.7 billion to \$22.4 billion. Read the full article [here](#).

Military Spending: The Worst Kind of Stimulus

Governments are still throwing billions into the military-industrial sector even with the economic downturn, argues Travis Sharp of the Center for Arms Control and Non-proliferation. Although providing more money for U.S. military personnel and less for high-priced weapons systems, the Obama administration's budget still increased military spending by 1.7%. Other countries including China and India are also increasing their military budgets. Most economists agree that despite the

economic downturn, most wealthy countries can still afford to spend as much on defence as they deem necessary without endangering their national economic wealth ([Read more](#)). But Sharp argues that there are reasons for optimism as the US government is beginning defence policy reforms that will result in greater accountability and transparency in military spending and provide more personnel benefits for troops ([Read more](#)).

President Obama on the Politics of Procurement

During his second prime-time press conference on March 24th, President Barack Obama renewed his commitment to procurement reforms but stated that taking on influential defence contractors would be "tough". "Because you know, lobbyists are very active in this area. Contractors are very good at dispersing the jobs and plants in the Defence Department widely," the US president said. President Obama identified a potential \$40 billion in savings that could come from overhauling some of the multibillion-dollar weapon systems, many of which are over budget and under-performing. [Read more](#).

Reconfiguring US Diplomacy

According to a Foreign Policy in Focus article, the US has never spent more than \$40 billion on non-military foreign engagement. This is in sharp contrast to its military spending which reached more than \$700 billion last year. President Obama, however, recently requested a 10% increase in funding for diplomacy and foreign assistance, perhaps signalling the beginning of a shift to preventative diplomatic measures. The United States is well-equipped for war but sorely under equipped for initiatives to prevent mass violence. Trevor Keck and Bridget Moix argue that if the US enhanced civilian-led diplomacy, bolstered conflict-sensitive assistance and supported multilateral efforts to prevent conflicts from turning lethal, it would make a serious contribution to the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) initiative. [Read more](#).

The Jelly Beans of Public Relations: Defence Contractors Go On Offensive As Cuts Loom

A Washington Post article recently reported that missile defence contractors Boeing and Northrop Grumman are going on the offensive in response to anticipated budget cuts from the Pentagon. President Obama has promised to cut back expensive large-scale weapon systems such as those of missile defence. In a report released last week, the General Accountability Office stated that US missile defence programs were now \$3 billion over budget. While serving guests cheese, crackers and cookies, Boeing executives recently defended the company's missile defence programs stating that cutting its ground-based missile defence systems could mean losing 55,000 "well-paying, clean industry" jobs in 36 states. Guests left the meeting with trinkets that bore the Boeing logo of its missile defence programs, including a bag of blue and white jelly beans and a magnetic dart board reading "Right on Target" with an exploding fireball in the background. [Read more](#).

Nuclear Weapons

Historic Treaty on Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Enters Into Force

Five central Asian states have ratified a historic treaty that establishes the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the northern hemisphere. The treaty, which entered into force on March 21st, has five state parties including the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The treaty encompasses an area where nuclear weapons previously existed and is the first to require its signatories to bring into force an Additional Protocol to their Safeguards Agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) within 18 months after the treaty enters into force, as well as to fully comply with the provisions of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). [Read more](#).

France to Compensate Victims of Nuclear Testing

On March 24th, the French government announced an initial 10 million euros in compensation for victims of past nuclear tests. Reuters reports that the historic announcement overturns the government's long held refusal to officially recognize the health consequences of its nuclear testing. France conducted a total of 210 nuclear weapon tests in Algeria and French Polynesia between 1960 and 1996. An estimated 150,000 civil and military workers who staffed the nuclear tests may be eligible for compensation along with some 2000 Maohi people on nearby islands. Read the full article [here](#).

World Physicians Petition Obama and Medvedev to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons

Over 300 of the world's top physicians and medical experts have written to US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev, calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons. The letter came on the eve of the first meeting between Presidents Obama and Medvedev that took place on April 1st. Signatories included heads of medical associations, health ministers, Nobel laureates, medical journal editors, and senior faculty of medical schools from over 38 countries. [Read more](#).

Some British Officials Suggest Dismantlement of Trident Program Could Be Used to Pressure Worldwide Disarmament

According to an article published on the Nuclear Threat Initiative website, with the high cost of updating the Trident nuclear-armed submarines and changing security threats, there is increasing talk of nuclear disarmament. The article suggests that some British officials are considering whether the nation could use its own disarmament to encourage global nuclear elimination. One government minister is quoted as stating "just dumping it gets you nothing. You do it when it will spur maximum disarmament by others". Shirley Williams, non-proliferation adviser to Prime Minister Gordon Brown, stated "Trident could be a crucial factor in reaching a serious international agreement...But to announce it now would be to chuck your queen away when you've only just started the chess game". Read the [full article](#).

Former Honorary President of the IPB, Jayantha Dhanapala, Argues for "Removal of the Nuclear Button"

In a recent article, Dhanapala explains the increasing attention nuclear disarmament is receiving in the U.S. and suggests that what we are witnessing from the Obama Administration could be called "anti-nuclear nuclearism". It is a situation in which there are rhetorical and also substantive commitments made to disarmament but that the commitments are poorly defined and unlikely to materialize into actual disarmament. Dhanapala points out that in President Obama's inaugural and the State of the Union addresses, mention of nuclear weapons was largely excluded except in passing. He argues that disarmament is not well served by anti-nuclear nuclearism and that it is a vital security issue requiring immediate attention like that given to the global financial crisis, climate change, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. [Read more](#).

Weapons and their effects

Japan Provides \$7.7 Million Boost to UN Mine Clearing in Africa

On March 10, the Japanese government announced that it would donate 762 million Japanese Yen (approximately \$7.7 million USD) to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to help the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad clear areas of unexploded mines. Japan is a major supporter of UNMAS and has provided over 35 billion Japanese yen (over \$350 million USD) to mine action programmes around the world. Read the full article [here](#).

International Support for Tougher Gun Laws in Colombia

International campaigners recently visited Colombia to support the 1.4 million Colombians who are petitioning their Congress for stronger gun laws. International Action Network on Small Arms representatives addressed government leaders in Bogotá, speaking about the worldwide trend towards stronger regulation and examples of successful Colombian initiatives to curb gun violence. Colombian citizens have put forward a petition that calls for a minimum age of 25 for gun possession and for compulsory insurance with every gun license. In addition, the petitioners want local municipalities to be given the power to restrict the carrying of guns in public within their boundaries. Read more [here](#).

Leader of All-Female Cluster-Bomb Clearance Team to Accept Tipperary Peace Prize on Behalf of CMC

Lamees Zein, a 30 year old former school teacher and mother of two, will accept the Tipperary Peace Prize on behalf of the Cluster Munitions Coalition (CMC) in Ireland on May 1st. Zein works with Norwegian People's Aid as a site supervisor of an all-female team of cluster-bomb clearance experts in Lebanon. There are millions of cluster bombs in Lebanon which were fired by Israel into the country during the 2006 war. At least 12 million square meters of land are affected. Unfortunately, the funding crisis has slowed down the mine clearing process, decreasing the number of mine clearance teams in operation. Read the full article [here](#).

Vietnam: NGO Expands Pig-Breeding Program for Unexploded Ordnance Survivors

Clear Path International (CPI), a US-based NGO working to assist survivors of unexploded ordnance in South East Asia, is expanding its pig-breeding income generation project. The project, first piloted in 2004, provides beneficiary households with agricultural training and grants to improve their pig-farming infrastructure, vaccinate new piglets, and purchase additional animals. Twenty households affected by bombs or landmines in the Gio Linh District of central Vietnam have been selected for the latest round of the project. Read more on the [CPI website](#).

Desert Residents in Niger Pay High Price for Uranium Mining

AREVA, a company primarily owned by the French government, is under scrutiny as increasing reports surface on the serious health and environmental impacts of their uranium mining on Niger desert communities. A 2007 report found that there were serious safety lapses in and near AREVA mining sites in which contaminated materials were not properly disposed. In addition, pastoralists in the area have accused the company of depleting the region's water and contaminating the sources which remain. According to a recent IRIN article, there may be a link between the recent rebel attacks on water and electricity plants that feed AREVA operations and the increasing frustration of the Niger people with AREVA's environmental non-compliance. Although in its January 2009 report AREVA dismissed the connection between its mining activities and elevated health problems in nearby communities, it has agreed to set up diagnostic health centres in all countries where it extracts uranium. [Read more](#).

Other news**UK Launch of International Parliamentarians Network for Conflict Prevention and Human Security**

On March 26th, the International Parliamentarians Network for Conflict Prevention and Human Security held its UK launch. The network, which was launched last year in Brussels, involves and engages parliamentarians to work together to prevent conflicts around the world. Currently, their two areas of focus are preventing tensions in Ukraine from escalating into conflict and water-based conflicts. Read the full article on the launch [here](#) or visit their [website](#).

Resources

New Book Details China's Global Strategy

British researcher Jenny Clegg's new book, *China's Global Strategy: Toward a Multipolar World*, looks at China's stance on a range of global issues and argues that the country takes a multilateral, consensus-building approach to world politics. Rather than following an imperialistic strategy in conflict with the American empire, Clegg argues that China is helping to build the institutions required to run a multipolar world that could lead to a more peaceful and equitable global society. The work is available through Pluto Books or directly by contacting Jon Wheatley at jonw@plutobooks.com.

Tackling India and the Arms Trade Treaty

The Control Arms Foundation of India's new book *India and the Arms Trade Treaty: Making Disarmament Meaningful to People's Lives* will be launched April 17th at India Habitat Centre in New Delhi. The book brings together contributions from different scholars, parliamentarians, former military personnel, and civil society members. Find out more [here](#).

Peace is Breaking Out: New Film *Soldiers of Peace* Showcases Stories From 14 Countries

A new film from Director Tim Wise, *Soldiers of Peace*, features initiatives and stories of peace from around the world. The film argues that humankind is at a crossroads in its development as a species and the only way to solve the problems we face is through peace. Viewers are challenged to take individual action to live a peaceful life. [Watch the trailer](#) or find out more about the film [here](#).

Advocacy Package on Nuclear Disarmament

The International Secretariat of Pax Christi International has created a new [Advocacy Package on Nuclear Disarmament](#) that summarizes the key elements of the nuclear issue, explains current global trends towards disarmament, and give concrete examples of advocacy action.

Current News and Commentary on the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty & Nuclear Weapons

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) Preparatory Commission's newsletter features a number of interesting articles covering topics that include OPEC contributions to a CTBTO pilot project, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown's recent comments on the Test-Ban Treaty, and how the case for the Treaty's ratification might be convincingly argued to the United States Congress. Click [here](#) to view the newsletter.

Peace and Conflict Monitor Features El Salvador & Current Economic Crises

The University for Peace's [Peace and Conflict Monitor](#) offers detailed analysis, reports, and audiovisual presentations on some of the most current topics in peace and conflict studies. Currently, the Monitor features content on the recent elections in El Salvador and an exclusive commentary by Professor Errol P. Mendes on legal corruption and its role in the current economic crisis. Forthcoming is a special issue in remembrance of the Rwandan genocide.

In Harm's Way: A History of Christian Peacemaker Teams Now Available

The new book, *In Harm's Way: A History of Christian Peacemaker Teams*, by Kathleen Kern chronicles the heroic efforts of Christian Peacemaker Teams, who have worked to confront oppression and war since the mid eighties utilizing non-violent strategies. Often, the teams and their local counterparts position themselves between warring parties in some of the most violent conflicts in the world. For more details, please follow this [link](#). Also available is [Justpeace Ethics: A Guide to Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding](#) by Jarem Sawatsky, which offers a straightforward guide to the ethics of resolving the problems that arise in the aftermath of conflict.

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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Editor: Alicia Dueck (alicia@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