



# IPB News

WWW: Working for a World Without War

International Peace Bureau

May 1<sup>st</sup> 2009

## **IPB Annual Conference – Washington D.C., Nov 14-18, 2009**

As the new U.S. administration has revived the hopes of peace activists inside and outside the USA, this conference, co-organized with Peace Action, 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. [Access the conference flyer](#).

## **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.

## **New Report Details Effect of Burma's Military Dictatorship on Development**

A new report entitled *Hold Our Ground*, from three grassroots Burmese political organizations, argues that Burma's military junta government confiscated land in areas of abundant natural resource and biodiversity in order to feed and financially support increasing troop numbers. This policy of confiscation was disastrous, impeding local economic development, and leading to drastic food and water shortages. [Read more about the report](#) and [access the full report in English](#).

## **When Your Investment Bombs**

Paying attention to what you invest in can make a big difference, writes Shireen Muhiudeen in *The Star*. Your money may be put directly or indirectly towards the production of cluster munitions, landmines, or arms. Muhiudeen argues that each person has a role to play in the elimination or reduction of these weapons through watching where their money goes. [Read the full article](#) or visit the [Network Vlaanderen website](#), an organization working to raise awareness on arms industry investments and links to the banking sector.

## **Military Spending**

### **Russia Rearms In Spite of Economic Downturn**

As Russia slips into a recession with unemployment rising as high as 12% and the economy predicted to shrink by 4.5% in 2009, there is one thing that will not be the victim of the financial downturn; the military. According to *Time*, Russian President Dmitri Medvedev has vowed to actually increase military spending to turn the Soviet-era industry into a technological, modern power. This year, Russian military spending has increased by 26% to \$37 billion with an extra \$1.9 billion for strategic weapons systems. This is in sharp contrast to government cuts of 33% to the

Energy Ministry and 30% to the Transport Ministry. Russia's military has experienced a boom in its arms exports in recent years, earning an estimated \$8.3 billion in sales during 2008, second in world sales only to the United States. [Read the full article.](#)

### **Peru to Boost Military Spending To Fight Rebel Controlled Coca-rich Areas**

A recent *Reuters* article reports that the Peruvian government has vowed to increase military spending in an effort to retake a coca-growing region in south-central Peru controlled by rebels. Currently, the army has 134 million personnel and \$43 billion budgeted in 2009 for operations in the coca-rich region, a sum set to increase although it is not known by how much. The army has faced 11 rebel ambushes this year, which in turn has called attention to problems such as shortages in weapons, food supplies, troops, as well as underage soldiers. [Read more.](#)

### **Pacific Freeze Campaign Launched**

The new campaign, coordinated by the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies, aims to reduce the military spending of the United States, Japan, China, Russia, South Korea, and North Korea which together account for 65% of global military spending. [Find out more information](#) and [sign their petition](#) online.

### **Robert Gates Restructures Budget and The Search for Real Military Spending Reductions**

A recent [Chicago Tribune article](#) says that lobbyists and lawmakers have been uncharacteristically quiet in the three weeks following Defence Secretary Robert Gates's dramatic proposal to cut back on big-ticket weapon system. Analysts have credited this to Gates's very astute strategy of imposing strict Pentagon secrecy when the plan was being deliberated and making the announcement just prior to a two-week break of Congress. Yet, as William Hartung points out in a [TPM article](#), arms producers such as Lockheed Martin who have witnessed the cancelation of their \$350 million-per-plane F-22 combat aircraft program, are not making a fuss because the new defence plan has allowed them to increase production in other areas. Even with cutbacks or the elimination of some of the larger scale defence programs, Obama's Pentagon budget is still 2-3% higher than the records set by Bush's administration. Benjamin Friedman in the [April 27<sup>th</sup> edition of The Christian Science Monitor](#) calls Gates's proposal "too cautious and inadequate". An upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) from the Defence Department, however, might usher in significant changes to the defence agenda of the Obama administration. According to Gordon Lubold in the [April 29<sup>th</sup> edition of The Christian Science Monitor](#), the year-long review of military strategy will be an important document which will direct how billions of dollars will be spent in upcoming years, likely much of it diverted towards unconventional forms of warfare. Both Hartung and Friedman argue that real cut backs in defence spending need to come from reducing the involvement of the U.S. in wars such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan; there is a need "to revive the debate about getting out of Iraq sooner rather than later," writes Hartung.

### **Democrats Express Growing Concern with War in Afghanistan**

Increasingly, Congressional Democrats are voicing concern on the Obama's administration's plans to increase military involvement in Afghanistan, according to the *New York Times*. While the party's leadership of the House and Senate is still confident of a bipartisan vote to approve the request for \$83.4 billion in war spending, more Democrats are saying that the current strategy does not adequately address the problems faced. Senator Russ Feingold of Wisconsin, believes that the strategy regarding Pakistan "has the potential to escalate, rather than diminish, this threat". [Read more.](#)

### **The U.S. Military-Industrial Complex: A Black Hole Sucking Life out of the American Economy**

In a recent opinion piece appearing in the *Online Journal*, Michael Payne argues that America's military-industrial complex is a black hole, draining the nation of its resources, diverting money away from social spending, and if left unchecked, could propel the country towards complete

economic collapse. Payne calls for a comprehensive review and analysis of all aspects of the military defence spending budget. [Read the full piece.](#)

### **"Books not Bombs," Maine University Students Protest**

A recent protest on April 20<sup>th</sup> by Maine Peace Action Committee, a University of Maine student group, protested military spending and called for increased funds for education. Adam Stern, the protest organizer stated that "Cutting social programs such as education is apparently the government's answer to where it will get the money to pay for the trillions of dollars in bailouts that it has already handed to banks and corporations. In doing so, they are completely ignoring the elephant in the room that is the bloated military budget". Protesters stood outside the library, carrying signs with phrases such as "imagine if we spent \$200 million on education". Read more from the [University of Maine student newspaper](#).

## **Nuclear Weapons**

### **European Parliament Calls for Complete Nuclear Disarmament by 2010**

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, the European Parliament approved the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention and the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol as concrete tools to achieve a nuclear weapons free world by 2020. Both documents are part of the overall Beer Report, a recommendation to the EU Council on non-proliferation and the future of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Pol D'Huyvetter, Executive Advisor for the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, called the move "very significant, even historic" and said that it gives a clear signal to "all EU member states to make nuclear disarmament a top-priority". According to an article from Mayors for Peace, the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol is considered complementary to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Preparatory Committee of which will be meeting in New York from May 4<sup>th</sup>. [Read more.](#)

### **Historic Trial in French Polynesia on Nuclear Testing Compensation**

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, eight French Polynesian victims of nuclear testing launched a case against France in Papeete, Tahiti in what is set to be a historic trial. The victims are asking for compensation for suffering due to illness and the destruction of family lives. Between 1966 and 1996, France conducted a total of 193 nuclear tests in French Polynesia. The effects have been disastrous; French Polynesian women have the highest rate of thyroid cancer in the world and the Fangataufa and Moruroa Atolls will remain barren and contaminated for years. This trial will give hope to victims of French nuclear testing in other areas of the world, particularly those in the Sahara desert region of Algeria. [Read more from Scoop Independent News.](#)

### **Gorbachev: Nuclear Disarmament Without Political Demilitarization is Just Rhetoric**

Although President Obama's call for a nuclear weapons free world is a welcome one, what is needed, argues former Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev, is to demilitarize world politics. Nuclear disarmament, Gorbachev stated on April 16<sup>th</sup>, would never amount to more than rhetoric if nations were asked to give up nuclear weapons while the United States maintained conventional military superiority. "Defense budgets far exceed reasonable security needs," Gorbachev said, noting the more than \$600 billion spent by the United States alone this year. "Many things need to happen in parallel with nuclear disarmament," he declared. [Read the full Associated Press article.](#)

### **Chinese Survivors of Nuclear Testing Demand Compensation**

The UK *Sunday Times* has released an article detailing shocking accounts of Chinese nuclear testing in the Gobi desert and its effects on the local population. Reports are surfacing that personnel went into the blast zone to retrieve test objects and rode into the mushroom clouds of atmospheric surface detonations with only gas masks. There are also indications that around 10,000 animals were placed within 2-8 kilometres of the blast centre, most of which were killed

immediately or within a few days after exposure. A Japanese scientist utilizing specialized techniques estimates that 1.48 million people were probably exposed to contamination during 32 years of nuclear testing in China while 190,000 died of cancer and 35,000 fetuses were deformed or miscarried due to exposure. Victim groups and veterans are starting to speak out and demand compensation. Last year, the minister of Civil Affairs said that the state had begun to pay "subsidies" to nuclear test personnel but no details were provided on the amounts nor does it appear as though these subsidies are reaching a critical mass of individuals. Scientists conducted a total of 46 tests around the Lop Nor site between 1964-1996. One test in November 1976 involved a device deployed from an aircraft which was 320 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. [Read the full article.](#)

### **CND: Plymouth Nuclear Submarine Dismantling Site an "Obscene Risk"**

According to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), the Devonport military base in Plymouth, UK will be the dismantling site for the UK's aging nuclear-powered submarines. When the 250,000 Plymouth residents were consulted on the managing and storing of nuclear submarine waste, there was overwhelmingly strong opposition. Nevertheless, it was recently confirmed by the Department of Defence that the city will be UK's sole city-centre nuclear dismantling site. Kate Hudson, CND Chair said, "This is an obscene risk which must not be allowed. Whatever safeguards are put in place, the fact that nuclear submarines and their reactors are to be broken up only a stone's throw from schools and homes is a national disgrace. It is totally inappropriate to create a nuclear dumping ground in the middle of a city of a quarter of a million people, which already suffers from high cancer levels". Find out more [here](#).

### **Namibian Prime Minister Calls for Peaceful Use of Uranium**

Prime Minister Angula of the uranium-rich Namibia has called for the peaceful use of uranium in his nation. According to the World Council of Churches, more and more countries are looking to uranium reserves in Africa to fuel nuclear plants and economic growth in this age of global warming. The African Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone Treaty, currently being promoted, would place safeguards over the security and environmental risks associated with uranium use. The mining of uranium is in any case highly controversial: Alice Slater argues in [Towards an International Renewable Energy Agency: Nuclear Power No Solution to Global Warming](#), that nuclear power has a limited ability to reduce greenhouse gases and along with its dangerous proliferation and pollution issues, it is an undesirable alternative energy source. [Read the full press release concerning Prime Minister Angula's statement.](#)

## **Weapons and their effects**

### **New SIPRI Figures on Arms Transfers Indicate Rise in Middle East Imports**

New figures from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) indicate that arms exports to the Middle East have increased 38% in the period 2004-2008, compared with 1999-2003. The majority of these arms came from the United States with the United Arab Emirates being the largest importer in the region overall and third biggest in the world. Access the full figures on the [SIPRI website](#).

### **President Obama Throws Support Behind Inter-American Arms Convention**

On April 16<sup>th</sup>, President Obama said that he would seek U.S. Senate ratification for an inter-American arms trafficking treaty. In November 1997, the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and other Related Materials which was signed by the United States but has yet to be ratified by the U.S. Senate. Now, a number of Senators are calling for the ratification of the Convention to help stem a recent escalation in violence from Mexican drug cartels. The Convention allows OAS members to combat the illicit trade in firearms that fuel

violence, by criminalizing illegal manufacture and sale of weapons as well as establishing a licensing and marking systems for imports and exports of firearms. Read more [here](#).

### **Costa Rican Legislator Proposes Ban on Uranium Weapons**

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, a member of Costa Rica's legislature, Alexander Mora Mora, released a draft for a comprehensive ban on uranium weapons which will be debated in the legislature. If successfully passed, the text will ban the use, transit, sale, production, and distribution in Costa Rica. Read more on the [International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons website](#).

### **Kashmir: Findings of International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice Released**

An International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice, which held hearings in Indian controlled Kashmir through 2008 and early 2009, has released its findings. The Tribunal noted that "the placement of landmines along the border and other sensitive areas in Jammu and Kashmir continues to endanger lives, including those of children". The Tribunal called for an audit to study the impact of landmines on local communities to determine the extent of devastation, casualties, and displacement. The Government of India is not a signatory to the Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines and has continued to justify landmine use in Jammu and Kashmir. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines encourages the Jammu and Kashmir State Government to follow up on this recommendation, since civil society actors are prohibited access to most communities in the border areas. [Read more](#).

### **Women Offer Action Plan to Reduce Gun Violence**

A recent conference, *Women Talking with Women: Crime and Violence in the Caribbean*, has yielded a 10 Point Regional Action plan as well as a policy framework for integration of women into decision making about violence prevention and alleviation. The conference, held in Trinidad and Tobago April 15-16<sup>th</sup> brought together 150 women representatives from labour, youth, community, and women's organizations as well as a number of government representatives from throughout the Americas. [Read more about the conference](#) and [access the 10 Point Regional Action Plan](#).

## **Other news**

### **CND Calls for Inquiry into UK Involvement in Iraq**

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) welcomed the end of UK combat operations in Iraq and called for a "comprehensive, open and credible inquiry into all factors leading up to and during the invasion and occupation". CND Chair, Kate Hudson, noted that it will take years for even the most basic services to be made available to all Iraqis. In addition, the use of depleted uranium and cluster munitions in combat are likely to have a lasting impact on health in many areas of the country. [Read the complete statement from CND](#).

### **New Anti-NATO Discussion List**

An anti-NATO email list for general discussions on NATO has been set up following suggestions presented at the Strasbourg anti-NATO protests. To find out more [visit the list website](#) or subscribe by sending an empty email to [discuss-nato-subscribe@lists.wri-irg.org](mailto:discuss-nato-subscribe@lists.wri-irg.org).

### **Canadian Peace Cafés: Towards a Culture of Peace**

Peace Cafés are beginning to spread right across Canada. These cafés, an initiative of the Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace, are dedicated to creating safe community spaces which foster a culture of peace. Offering workshops, library resources, and dialogue opportunities, these cafés provide an important community resource as well as wholesome food and drink options. With two locations in Ontario in Hamilton and Walkerton, movements to develop cafés in Toronto, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Nelson are underway. For more information, see the [Peace Café website](#).

**War 2.0: Irregular Warfare in the Information Age**

This new book from Thomas Rid and Marc Hecker, argues that the rise of insurgencies and the Web are putting modern armies under huge pressure to adapt. Tracing the way in which insurgents and counterinsurgents have adapted irregular techniques, utilizing the internet among other means, they argue that technology such as this is levelling the playing field in irregular warfare. A recent article from *The Guardian* states that cyberwar is an increasing fear of intelligence chiefs in Britain and around the western world. Disruption of communication networks could be particularly disastrous while banking websites and the electricity grid are considered vulnerable spots. NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn, Estonia is where the top experts from NATO nations are exploring the issue of cyberthreats. Find out more about the book [here](#), [read an excerpt](#), and [read The Guardian article on cyberwar](#).

**Resources****UN Disarmament Yearbook Now Available**

The 2008 Disarmament Yearbook, compiles the resolutions and decisions of the First Committee and the General Assembly of the Sixty-third session of the United Nations concerning disarmament. The Yearbook also summarizes the issues under consideration in early autumn, 2009. [Find out more](#).

**UN Register of Conventional Arms: Reporting Transfers of Small Arms and Light Weapons**

A new paper from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), details and analyses UN member states' reporting of international transfers of small arms and light weapons to the UN Register of Conventional Arms in 2007. It concludes that the level of reporting is now high enough that a new, eighth category should be added to the registry. [Download the report from SIPRI](#).

**Six-Legged Soldiers: Using Insects as Weapons of War**

A new book from award-winning science writer Jeffrey A. Lockwood, looks at the use of insects as weapons of war from prehistoric times to the present day. Among many other topics, Lockwood covers the development of bee bombs in the ancient world, insect-borne diseases during Napoleon's military campaigns, World War II airplanes dropping plague-infested fleas, the use of beetles to destroy crops, and the testing of disease-carrying lice on prisoners of war, among many other topics. He also points to the ease with which insects could be used in warfare today. [Find more information](#).

**Beyond the Bullet: Personal Stories of Gun Violence Aftermath**

How do people cope after a loved one is killed due to gun violence? In Heidi Yewman's new book, she presents the stories of survivors, family members, and friends impacted by gun violence in the United States. More than 30,000 families are affected by gun violence deaths every year in America. In each story, the anguish, confusion, fear, and grief suffered at the pull of a trigger are told in vivid detail. Author Heidi Yewman provides astonishing illustrations and manages to find some common characteristics in how grief plays out for different people in tragically similar circumstances. [Find out more](#).

**Carbon Markets and the Global Financial Crisis**

The April edition of Climate Action newsletter focuses on issues surrounding carbon markets during the global recession. Feature articles include a discussion on the role of U.S carbon markets in indicating a shift in global priorities, the possible loss of carbon offset buyers of clean energy projects, and an item featuring Greenpeace's prediction of a collapse of world carbon markets if forest protection credits were included amongst international emissions trading. Access the [Climate Action Website](#) to find out more.

## 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](#).

*If you have reports of activities that are relevant to this newsletter please email them to the Secretariat.*

To subscribe to or unsubscribe from this newsletter please email: [mailbox@ipb.org](mailto:mailbox@ipb.org)

Editor: Alicia Dueck ([alicia@ipb.org](mailto: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](http://www.ipb.org)