



International Peace Bureau

WWW: Working together for a World Without War

IPB News

September 30th 2008 edition

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.

"The state of our world today is deplorable, inexcusable and therefore, shameful. What Tolstoy denounced as "mad selfishness" explains why, as trillions of dollars are spent on wars of aggression, more than half the world's people languish in hunger and destitution."

Ambassador Miguel D'Escoto, Nicaragua, president of the UN General Assembly, [16 Sept 2008](#)

OUT OF CONTROL

IPB Secretary-General Colin Archer comments on the links between the current financial meltdown and over-funding of the military. Find the text [here](#).

Excessive military spending is a perversion of values, Costa Rica says at UN

Universal literacy, the eradication of many preventable diseases and safe drinking water for everyone could all be achieved if the world spent as much on those causes as it already does on military forces, Costa Rica's President [told](#) the General Assembly on September 24th in a call for a radical re-think of global spending. "On a planet where one-sixth of the population lives on less than a dollar a day, spending \$1.2 trillion on arms and soldiers is an offence and a symbol of irrationality", said Óscar Arias Sánchez.

MDGs: new commitments made at the UN - but no mention of military

At the very moment when the US administration was struggling with the \$700 bn bailout package, and just days after Congress approved a \$612 bn military budget, the UN achieved a \$16bn set of commitments towards the MDGs. The dramatic difference in these figures tells its own story. Can we find even one rich-world government willing to make the specific connection and adjust its priorities? This will be the challenge for 2009. [More](#).

Development costs of arms proliferation: Guns Versus Bread

An [article](#) by the independent weekly *Mainstream* summarises different reports showing that, while the proliferation of arms has proven costly

everywhere in terms of the increased risk to human lives, this cost has been the highest in communities already burdened heavily with poverty and denial of basic needs.

"Healthcare NOT Warfare" a campaign by the Progressive Democrats of America

Launched in early 2008 with a petition, this campaign pressures the Congress to "redirect unnecessary and wasteful military spending to meeting human needs", and specifically healthcare. More information about the campaign and online signing [here](#).

Military vs. social spending

Indonesia not part of Asian 'arms race': defence minister

After Australia announced it planned to build up its military in response to a regional weapons buying spree, the Indonesian defence minister said Sept. 18th, his country will avoid any major boost to military spending over the next 5 or 10 years, as it focuses on the economy and social spending. Indonesia, however, plans to buy a small number of high-tech jets and submarines to reach "technological parity" with its neighbours. [AFP article](#). In [his blog](#), well-known journalist Brian Toohy qualifies Rudd's military alarmism as unjustified.

Half of Canadians want reduction in Tory military spending: poll

The poll, conducted for the Rideau Institute, an advocacy group that opposes Canada's participation in the Afghanistan war, found that 51.8% of Canadians surveyed agreed that the next federal government should "reduce its planned spending on purchasing new equipment and the war." The conservative government plans to boost military spending by \$490 billion over two decades. Read the full article on *The Globe and Mail* [website](#).

Russia: defence spending will rise 27% to a post-Soviet record of \$ 47.9 billion next year

Spending including arms purchases and pay rises may reach 1.28 trillion rubles (\$47.9 billion) in 2009, 70 billion rubles higher than previously planned, Russian authorities [announced recently](#). Adding to this total the increases in space programmes, nearly 2.4 trillion rubles (\$94.23 billion) will be allocated for national defence and security, according to a news [report](#).

Pressing calls for defence spending boost in Europe

- Founded last year by ex-servicemen concerned with the low priority the government gives to defence, the UK National Defence Association called for a 40% increase in the £33 billion core military budget over the coming three years - well above the 1.5% annual increase currently envisaged. The Ministry of Defence insists that its budget was experiencing "its longest period of sustained real growth for over 30 years". Full article [here](#).

- In a recent visit to Australia, the French defence minister agreed with his Australian counterpart in blaming Europe for insufficient defence spending. Condemning the fact that "Europe, with the exception of Britain and France, has since quite a long time ago decided to disarm and to not allocate sufficient funding for defence and security", he reaffirmed the French

government's commitment to intensify its presence in Afghanistan. Full [article](#).

- U.S. defence chief noted before his European counterparts on Sept. 19, that only five of NATO's 26 members meet the group's defence budget standard (2% of economic output). And added that European countries have gone too far toward what he called "pacification"! Full report by VOA [here](#).

- The balance of the defence-to-development ratio of many European countries is however taken as a model by those who know that security is not only a military issue. See the [blog](#) of Ernie Regehr, co-founder of Project Ploughshares.

Land of Gandhi asserts itself as global military power

In recent years, while world attention has focused on China's military, India has begun to refashion itself as an armed power with global reach: a power willing and able to dispatch troops thousands of miles from the subcontinent to protect its oil shipments and trade routes, to defend its large expatriate population in the Middle East and to shoulder international peacekeeping duties. Full analysis from the [International Herald Tribune](#).

According to the [Telegraph](#), India's military spending (approx. \$28bn) is set to overtake Britain's present defence budget (\$62bn) within five years as the country transforms its armed forces.

Surge in global arms sales

- U.S. Department of Defense has agreed so far this fiscal year to sell or transfer more than \$32 billion in weapons and other military equipment to foreign governments, compared with \$12 billion in 2005. Full story on the independent news website [Truthout](#).

- Similar rising trends are observed from Switzerland, where arms exports in 2008 are set for a 20-years high. However, a ban on arms exports should be put to the vote next year.

- Russia is lending \$1 billion to Venezuela to buy Russian arms, the Kremlin said ahead of a visit by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. See [AFP report](#).

Amnesty International new report on arms trade

'Blood on the Crossroads' is a new Amnesty International report supporting the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). It provides case studies of irresponsible arms transfers to Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Iraq, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan/Chad and Uganda. Download the 136pp report [here](#).

Weapons and their effects

UN Secretary General publishes report on uranium weapons - ICBUW comments

The report, published in response to last year's GA resolution, contains the opinions of 15 states plus those of the IAEA and WHO. Opinion in the report is largely divided between states that accept that there is a problem and others, chiefly NATO members, who deny that DU can damage human health and the environment. Find [here](#) comments by the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons and a link to the 24pp report.

Global Week of Action to Ban Cluster Bombs - **take action!**

Taking place from 27 Oct. to 2 Nov. this GWOA will focus on media work to urge all governments to sign the treaty in Oslo on December 3rd. Besides signing the '[people's treaty](#)' you can find on the Cluster Munitions Coalition's [website](#) suggestions and tips to organise various actions.

17 states have agreed on rules for private military contractors

At the initiative of the Swiss authorities and of the Red Cross, 17 countries including the US endorsed, Sept. 17th, a document reaffirming that military and security contractors dispatched to war zones must comply with the international law, and that states have a particular responsibility for ensuring compliance. More [here](#).

Weapons of mass destruction

U.S. Congress Blocks New Nuclear Warhead !!

In one of the last bills of the year, Congress eliminated funding for a new nuclear weapon, the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW). The provision was buried in a 912-page military authorization bill that the Senate passed on a voice vote on Saturday afternoon and sent to the president for his signature. This is the second year in a row that Congress has rejected the Bush administration's proposal for the nuclear warhead. Many national and local arms control and religious organizations worked for years to convince Congress not to fund the program. [More](#).

Other news

What to say about the US 'bailout' discussions ?

Two articles, one by John Galtung and one by Jan Oberg, offer alternatives to mainstream perspectives on what is going on under the - euphemistic - term 'bailout'. Find them on the *Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research's* [website](#).

Michael Moore's [homepage](#) also provides an interesting perspective.

IPB signs Ubuntu statement on a Currency Transaction Tax for Financing Development

The World Forum of Civil Society Networks (UBUNTU) calls for the creation of a global Currency Transaction Tax for Financing Development (CTT for FfD). Find more details in the [communiqué](#) and the initial list of signatories. This call is related to the broader **World Campaign for an in-depth Reform of the System of International Institutions**, to which individuals and organisations are encouraged to [sign](#).

"Unignorable messages" from Stavanger peace gathering

IPB has a long relationship with our colleagues in Norway, but we had never before held a Board meeting in Stavanger, the oil capital on the west coast. The opportunity arose because Stavanger shares with Liverpool the title of European Cultural Capital 2008. Among the high points of the year's programme was an important peace conference held there on Sept 10-12, put together by the Point of Peace organisation. The title was 'Unignorable Messages: Alarms and Solutions'. More [here](#).

Jayantha Dhanapala on terrorism, nationalism and consumerism

Noting that terrorism, nationalism and consumerism are likely to continue to dominate global affairs, the President of Pugwash stresses the importance of collective and cooperative attention and energies in dealing with these challenges: "Ultimately, the response to the three '-isms' is another '-ism' - multilateralism. Effective and cooperative multilateralism." [Full article](#) in *The Hindu*.

SEF Policy Paper 29 - "Afghanistan: Policy Adjustments or Withdrawal?"

By mid-October, the German Bundestag has to decide on the extension and expansion of the mandate for the Afghanistan deployment of the German Bundeswehr. The new [Policy Paper 29](#) of the Development and Peace Foundation, entitled "Afghanistan: Policy Adjustments or Withdrawal? Political Implications of the Escalation of Violence" by Dr Jochen Hippler analyses the current situation in Afghanistan and the political failures of the recent years.

Youth website launched from New Zealand parliament

New Zealand Minister of Youth Affairs launched on 23 Sept. a youth peace website [ENACT](#) in conjunction with [United Nations International Day for Peace](#). The website - developed by the [Peace Foundation](#), New Zealand secondary school students and other youth - includes information and initiatives for youth on promoting peaceful relationships at home, in the community and around the world.

Balkans Peace Park Project

B3P works towards the creation of a transborder, environmentally protected park in the adjoining, magnificently beautiful, though rather inaccessible single mountain range (the Accursed Mountains) which span the borders of Northern Albania, Kosovo/a and Montenegro. The work symbolises peace and cooperation in promoting environmental conservation alongside stimulating local employment and sustainable visitor activities and counteracting migration. More on the [project website](#).

In Memoriam: Nicholas Gillett

We are sad to report the death of Nicholas ("Nicco") Gillett (UK, 1914 - 2008) who was a firm supporter of the IPB and did much to help advance the cause of peace, as these two obituaries show: [more](#).

Resources

Interactive map of US military presence worldwide - and more on [Motherjones.com](#)

Mother Jones is an independent US non-profit whose roots lie in a commitment to social justice implemented through first rate investigative reporting. See for example: <http://www.motherjones.com/military-maps/>

***Landmine Casualty Data: Best Practices Guidebook* released**

This 75-page *Guidebook*, published by the Mine Action Information Center at James Madison University, integrates information from a wide variety of sources and presents detailed case studies, recommended best practices, lessons learned and contacts and resources for victim assistance information management and program planning. It is available for free download [here](#).

Book: Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy

Pakistan is a strategic ally of the US in the "war on terror". It is the third largest receiver of US aid in the world. Yet Pakistan is a state run by its army. Ayesha Siddiqa (holding a PhD in War Studies) shows how the power of the military has transformed Pakistani society, where the armed forces have become an independent class, with a major stake in the economy. More details [here](#).

Opportunities

Women Peacemakers Program - Nonviolence education and training 2009

Call for applications for Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East, Europe, Caucasus and The Pacific. Nonviolence training provides Civil Society Organizations with essential peacebuilding skills and concepts, focusing on ways to increase social mobilization and countervailing power. Nonviolence training aims to empower marginalized groups so that they can assert their rights, create their own opportunities, and access resources. WPP will provide financial support and links to trainers and resource people, and/or materials. For the list of criteria and application form, visit: http://ifor.org/WPP/education_nonviolence.htm. See also an 'International Orientation' internship opportunity at the IFOR secretariat, The Netherlands.

Job Alert: Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign

[Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign](#), is looking for a campaigner to work at its International Secretariat in Ypres, Belgium. Details [here](#).

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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