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Newsletter

October 2015

IPB Family Meets in Padova for Annual Conference: 'Peace Paths'



It is many years since IPB organised a conference in Italy, and this year's event **Peace Paths, Oct. 22-25**, orchestrated by our Board member Lisa Clark, marked a happy return.

The stunning blue skies matched those in the famous Giotto frescoes that some of us had a chance to view. The Italian hospitality was very generous and the group atmosphere was warm and cheerful. The two main highlights were the formal session in the Aula Magna of the ancient University of Padova, attended by a large group of local students; and the public ceremony of the **2015 Sean MacBride Peace Prize**, awarded to the people of two island communities: 1) Lampedusa, Italy, and 2) Gangjeon Village, Jeju Island, S. Korea.

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Military Spending



U.S. Congress and White House Reach Budget Deal

After five years of bitter clashes, Republican congressional leaders and President Obama settled their last budget fight. The deal increases defense and domestic spending by \$80bn and lifts the national borrowing limit over the next two years. These increases will be offset by cuts in spending on Medicare and Social Security disability benefits, as well as savings or revenue from other programs. Approved by Senate on **October 30th in a 64-35 vote**, the bill now sits in Obama's hand awaiting the final signature.

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Let's Say the U.S. Reduced the Pentagon Budget, Then What?

John Feffer, director of Foreign Policy in Focus, discusses that challenges of the U.S. foreign policy theme of 'countering bad' and the problematic solution of burden sharing; pointing out that U.S. allies are already increasing their militaries, and yet congress is not reducing the budget. When looking for solutions to the increasing militarization of states, Feffer rejects strict isolationism vs. internationalism theories and instead suggests the development of arms control agreements, inclusive regional security mechanisms and international gun control.

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More on Military Spending

The Record of the U.S. Military Budget

New Strategic Bomber Contract Awarded After Millions of Dollars Worth of Lobbying

Finnish Defense Facing New Possible Cuts

French to Boost Defense Budget

AUSTRALIA- An Expanding Defense Budget is a Hard Sell for New Minister Marise Payne

OPINION, USA: Budget for the Future, A Sliver of Pentagon's Lode Would go a Long Way

Top Pentagon Weapon Buyers Say Budget Gridlock Threatens Hundreds of Projects



Japan Proposes Cut in Budget for Upkeep Costs of U.S. Bases

Following the controversial legislation last month, the Japanese government has proposed to the United States a cut in Tokyo's burden in upkeep of U.S. military facilities and personnel. The government hopes to reach a conclusion with the United States by the end of December when the government compiles a draft of the fiscal 2016 budget.

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Russia Defies Recession to Fund Syria Conflict

The Russian government has recently sent a draft of the 2016 budget to the Duma; and despite the current stinging recession, no one has mentioned the military spending on the bombing campaigns in Syria. With rising inflation rates, increased dependence on oil-related revenue and budget cuts in social areas including pensions, Moscow continues operations in Syria. It is estimated that the country will allocate at least 5.42% of the GDP towards military expenditure, a rate that has been steadily rising for seventeen years.

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Arms Trade

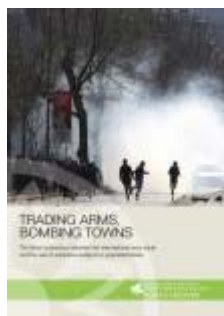


Amnesty Calls for Suspension of Arms to Saudi Arabia Over Deadly Strikes on Yemen

Amnesty International is calling for a suspension of arms transfers to members of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition. These weapons and munitions have been used to commit violations of international humanitarian law, including war

crimes in Yemen; in particular, bombs from the MK 80 series and other general purpose bombs, fighter jets, combat helicopters and their associated parts and components.

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Trading Arms, Bombing Towns

Reaching Critical Will has published a new report that looks at the lethal connection between the international arms trade, the use of explosive weapons and the refugee crisis.

It explores the potential effects that stricter prohibitions against arms transfers and commitments against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas could have on reducing humanitarian harm and displacement. It calls on governments to take responsibility for their actions, prioritize human security over war profiteering and seeks new, preventative solutions to violence and war.

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More on Arms Trade

Extend the Embargo on China and End the Arms Sale

U.S. Sells New Warship to Saudi Arabia Despite Warnings of War Crimes & Civilian Deaths in Yemen

Kuwait is Buying Weapons to Protect Itself from the Islamic State

Nuclear



Legal Gap or Compliance Gap?

Signed in 2014, over 100 nations supported the Humanitarian Pledge which works to protect civilians and the environment from the consequences of warfare. With this pledge it is clear that the use of nuclear weapons would be a violation of humanitarian law. However, many states have failed to eliminate nuclear weapons, an act that should be seen as a compliance gap with international law.

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U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry Announces a New Push for Nuclear Test Ban

In a surprising move on October 21st, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry announced a new push to get the Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Speaking at an event organized by the National Nuclear Security Administration, Kerry pledged to spend his last year in office making the case for why the US should sign onto the agreement. Entry into this treaty would legally prohibit the U.S. from performing nuclear explosive tests- something the government has been going on a de facto basis since 1992.

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[More on Nuclear Weapons](#)

[A New Challenge to UK's Nuclear Weapons](#)

[Trident Cost-Saving Options](#)

Impacts



Military Barracks for Profit? A Critical Reflection on Conversion in Italy

Dr. Andrea Licata, a political scientist from Italy and Associate Researcher of **BICC**, comments on the Italian politics of base conversion. Licata criticizes the state budget-driven approach to closing bases and argues for base conversion in accordance with sustainability principles. This process would include a thorough clean-up of the area and the conservation of green spaces and places of historical and cultural value.

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Fukushima: The View From Ground Zero

Photographer and filmmaker Arkadiusz Podniesinski documents his 2015 visit to the radiated zone around the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, and continuing effects of the triple disaster of 11 March, 2011 compounded by earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown. Podniesinski highlights both the desperate lives of thousands who continue to live in limbo in government emergency housing, unable to return home, but also the plight of some who have chosen to return. Podniesinski's photograph above shows a banner on one of the main streets of Futaba that reads: "Nuclear power is the energy of a bright future".

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More on Impacts

U.S. to Clean Up Spanish Radioactive Site 49 Years After Plane Crash

Bikini Islanders Seek U.S. Refuge as Sea Levels Threaten Homes

Small Arms and Light Weapons: Are Mass Shootings Preventable?

States Support the Development of a Political Commitment on Explosive Weapons

Focusing on the Human Impact: Humanitarian Community Meets in New York to Discuss Next Steps

Miscellaneous

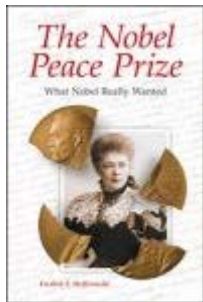


U.S. Troops to Remain in Afghanistan through 2017

WASHINGTON- President

Obama halted the withdrawal of American military forces from Afghanistan, announcing that thousands of troops will remain in the country through the end of his term in 2017. In response to this indefinite prolongation of the American role in a war that has already lasted 14 years, IPB calls for readers to **Tell President Obama: Keep Your Promise to End the War** and/or to **Reject the Plan to Continue War on Afghanistan**.

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Lawsuit Initiated Against Nobel Foundation for Mismanagement of Peace Prize

Photographer The controversy over peace prizes disconnected

from the specific peace vision of Alfred Nobel is now coming to a head in a lawsuit initiated by Mairead Maguire, David Swanson, Jan Oberg and the Nobel Peace Prize Watch. None of the members of the Board of the Nobel Foundation had responded when the time limit set in a notice of litigation expired in early October. In December 2012 the members of the Board of the Nobel Foundation did not heed protests from four Nobel laureates, including IPB, who had warned that "The EU is clearly not the 'champion of peace' that Alfred Nobel had in mind when he wrote his will".

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More Miscellaneous

The Investigation Into the Islamic State and Chemical Weapons

Global Witness: As Myanmar approaches historic election, new report reveals secret jade trade worth US\$31 billion

Stopping the War Business + Actions Against the ADEX Arms Fair

Resources



New Book on the Spanish Military Industrial Lobby (Espanol/Catalan)

Pere Ortega's new book *El Lobby de la Industria Militar Española: Adónde van Nuestros Impuestos* explores the pressures that military-industrial lobbyists put on the Spanish government. Ortega describes how the trend of political and military leaders becoming managers of military enterprises combined with the oligopoly of the military industry in Spain has

lead to a 35 million euro debt that has been accumulated due to military purchases.

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New Publication- Women, Weapons and War

From This briefing paper provides a gender critique of several multilateral instruments in order to address problems with categorizing women as a vulnerable group, undermining women's participation and gender diversity in disarmament, reinforcing violent masculinities and perpetuating structures of patriarchal militarism. It offers several concrete recommendations for states and other actors to change our framing, implementing existing tools holistically, and develop stronger norms, standards and laws to advance gender diversity, disarmament and peace.

[READ MORE](#)

More Resources

[Positive Peace Report 2015](#)

[Report: "Healing Communities, Transforming Society; exploring the nexus between psycho-social needs, practice and peacebuilding"](#)

[International Week of Action Against the Militarization of Youth](#)



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