



April 17, 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, 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. Click [here](#)

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

Armed Violence and Development: Make Your Voice Heard!

The UN Secretary General has invited member states to send him their views on how to promote development through the reduction of armed violence. The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) is encouraging people to contact their government officials, get involved in assisting officials developing their country's submission, and publically promote the exercise. The deadline for country's submissions in May 31st. More information is available on the [IANSA website](#).

Caught in the Conflict: Civilians in Afghanistan and Security Strategy

This new paper, signed by 11 prominent NGOs, makes recommendations on how the security strategy of the international community should be changed in order to reduce the impact of the conflict on development and humanitarian activities as well as to minimize harm to Afghan civilians. The paper does not comment of the efficacy of security strategies adopted by any of the parties involved in the conflict. Click [here](#) to access the paper.

Military Spending

Call for Civil Society Engagement: The Economic Crisis & Development Finance

The United Nations Non Governmental Liaison Service is organizing a panel discussion and public symposium intended to provide a platform for under-represented groups to voice their opinion on the global debate surrounding the causes, effects, and solutions for the current global financial crisis and financing for development. On April 20th, the ECOSOC panel discussion on financing for development will take place in New York which will be followed by a public symposium on the economic crisis on May 18-19th in Geneva. [Find out more.](#)

Defence Secretary Announces Broad Re-shaping of the Pentagon Budget

On April 6th, Defence Secretary Robert Gates announced cuts in missile defence programs, Navy shipbuilding operations, and the Army's Future Combat Systems in the new Pentagon budget. According to the *New York Times*, Mr. Gates stated that in addition to cuts, supplemental appropriations outside of the regular budget, like those that took place under the Presidency of George W. Bush, would no longer be allowed. Generally, Mr. Gates stated that he hoped to impose a new culture on the Pentagon, particularly in the way it chooses and buys weapons. But with all of the cuts, the announcement also included adding 2,8000 troops to the Army special forces, and an additional \$2 billion next year on battlefield intelligence-gathering, as well as more spending on special forces units and 50 new Predator and Reaper drones. A [Los Angeles Times](#) article reports that surprisingly, missile defence spending was cut by only \$1.4 billion. Overall, 50% of the \$534 billion budget will be used to counter conventional threats, 10% towards irregular warfare, and 40% being used on weapons for both types of conflict. Read the full *New York Times* article [here](#). The Task Force on a Unified Security Budget for the United States (USB) outlined a set of \$60.7 billion in reductions to the defence budget, and made the case for why these cuts could be made with no sacrifice to our security. Click [here](#) to see how the Secretary's budget stacks up to those recommendations.

Australia Must Increase Defence Spending, Think Tank Argues

The Lowry Institute for International Policy recently released a report arguing that Australia must boost defence spending to give its military the means to deal with strategic challenges presented by China's rise as a global superpower. The report recommended that military spending be increased from 2.0 percent of the total Australian gross domestic product to 2.5 percent. It called for the tripling of the submarine fleet, doubling its current order for F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, and increasing the number of infantry troops available for regional deployments. The report's author, Hugh White argues that "China's challenge to US primacy undercuts the most basic assumptions of Australian defence policy, and poses big questions." Access the *Agence France-Presse* article [here](#).

Stirring the Pot: The GAO Report

A recent report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office reviewed 47 defence programs, stating that the top weapon systems were nearly \$300 billion over budget. In response, the Senate Armed Services Committee has proposed a the Weapons Systems Acquisition Reform Act, to address some of the pervasive problems highlighted in the GAO report. However, according to a recent article from *Politico*, many lobbyists and politicians are reporting serious loopholes in the bill; they argue that the legislation initially gives the appearance of reform when in actuality it is riddled with waivers in which the Pentagon is allowed to waive rules for reasons of national security. [Read more.](#)

UFPJ Petition: Let's Cut the Military Budget!

The United for Peace and Justice organization has launched a petition calling for a 25% cut to the United States military budget by 2010. They argue that the current financial crisis makes the need for reductions in military spending particularly urgent. [Sign the petition](#) or [find out more.](#)

European Aerospace Industry Calls for Government Investment

According to a recent *Bloomberg* article, the aerospace industry is asking for increased research and development support from EU institutions and national governments across Europe even though the continent's industry is healthy. Allan Cook, Cobham's chief executive officer said that "our sector is not asking for any government bailout...[but] we do need EU institutions and national governments across Europe to increase investment" in research. In particular, the industry is hoping that governments will bolster military spending and provide more guarantees for exports to offset a sales slump in civilian planes, as customers postpone orders for airliners and business jets. [Read the full article](#).

Nuclear Weapons

Obama's Historic Prague Speech: Anti-nuclear NGOs Issue Call to Action

On April 5th, President Obama delivered a historic speech in Prague in which he called for a world without nuclear weapons. President Obama declared that "just as we stood for freedom in the 20th century, we must stand together for the right of people everywhere to live free from fear in the 21st. And as a nuclear power- as the only nuclear power to have used nuclear weapons- the United States has a moral responsibility to act". He continued, "I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" ([full text](#)). The declaration was greeted warmly by the anti-nuclear community. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) expressed pleasure with the speech, particularly with President Obama's determination to ensure US ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and intention to support a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty ([full press release](#)). The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) called for active civil society engagement. "He needs all the support and encouragement in the world" ICAN representatives wrote in a recent opinion piece. "We do not know how long this opportunity will last. Unlike the last one, at the end of the Cold War, it must not be squandered" ([full article](#)). Following a detailed overview of the different propositions made by President Obama and President Medvedev, Abolition 2000 echoed ICAN, declaring that "it will take an enormous grassroots effort to make good on the Obama-Medvedev vision for a nuclear-weapons-free world" ([full article](#)).

Former Australian and Polish Prime Ministers and Presidents Call for Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

A recent letter from former Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser and signed by five other prestigious former Australian politicians, military leaders, and medical scientists, was sent this week to Prime Minister Rudd, calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons. The 'group of 6' has also recently released an opinion piece which appeared in *The Age* on April 8th on the opportunity for Australia to take the lead in the abolition of nuclear weapons. [Read the full opinion piece](#) and [read an article about the group's letter](#). A group of former Polish Presidents and Prime-Ministers have also written an opinion piece which was published in the *Gazeta Wyborcza* on April 3rd that highlighted the urgent need to free the world from the "nuclear menace". Read the full article [here](#). Visit the [Global Zero website](#) to find out more about this organization which brings together leaders and citizens to promote a nuclear free world.

Anti-Nuclear Coalition Creates Action Program for President Obama

A coalition of six anti-nuclear groups have released their plan for influencing the Obama administration policies toward nuclear disarmament. President Obama's "2009 Nuclear Posture Review", which will lay out the US's plan regarding the retention and reduction of its existing nuclear weapons, is set to be released later this year. The coalition, called the Nuclear Weapons Complex Consolidation Policy Network, calls for slashing US nuclear stockpiles to 500 weapons between 2015 and 2020 as well as the scaling down of nuclear weapons complexes. Read the full article from Mercury News [here](#).

The Nuclear Morality Flowchart: A New Disarmament Tool

Is there a deep moral inconsistency in the lives of everyone who accepts the use of nuclear weapons for the defence of their country? Could this be the critical point at which to engage in the nuclear debate? The Nuclear Morality Flowchart Project provides the means for everyone to decide their own position on the morality of deterrence and further to demand morally accountable government decisions. Find out more by clicking [here](#) or view the [flowchart](#).

Weapons and their effects

New Report: Cluster Munitions Used in Russia-Georgia Conflict

On April 14th, Human Rights Watch released a report which documents dozens of civilian deaths and injuries caused from the use of cluster munitions by both Russia and Georgia in their conflict over South Ossetia. "A Dying Practice: Use of Cluster Munitions by Russia and Georgia in August 2008", confirms that both sides used cluster bombs in populated areas killing 16 civilians and injuring 54 more in Georgia. The unexploded sub-munitions continue to pose threats and interfere with the lives and livelihoods of the population. Neither Russia nor Georgia has signed the convention comprehensively banning cluster munitions. Read the [full press release](#) or [the report](#).

NATO Ready to Take a New Look at Depleted Uranium

In a recent meeting with campaigners, NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Security Cooperation and Partnership, Robert Simmons, said that the organization is prepared to take a fresh look at the health and environmental impacts of uranium weapons. Simmons explained that NATO has no control over the choice of weapons made by its member states for use in conflict although it should be noted that NATO does have "operational plans" for the protection of its members' troops from contamination. According to the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons, NATO has traditionally appeared content to follow the advice of the World Health Organization when considering uranium risks. The WHO has been widely criticized following its 2003 report that excluded peer-reviewed data suggesting that depleted uranium was carcinogenic. With the increasing number of scientific publications linking depleted uranium exposure with ill health, the WHO and the international community is under greater pressure to formally recognize the effects of such weapons. [Read more](#).

Belgium to Ban Financing for Uranium Weapon Manufacturers & Sellers

According to the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons, Belgium's Senate has recently voted to ban the financing of companies that manufacture or sell uranium weapons. The decision will complement the country's forthcoming ban on the manufacture, testing, sale, use and stockpiling of uranium weapons. Both pieces of legislation will come into force on June 20th, 2009. [Read more](#).

Advocates and Government Representatives Gather in Thailand for Regional Meeting for the Mine Ban Treaty Second Review Conference

In the first week of April 2009, members of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) gathered in Bangkok, Thailand along with government representatives from 18 countries to attend the second in a series of regional meetings convened in the lead-up to the Mine Ban Treaty's Second Review Conference. The Thai Minister of Foreign Affairs opened the conference on April 2nd with a call to Southeast Asian nations still outside the convention to join it quickly. Both he and the conference chair, the Thai Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, called for a peaceful resolution to the border tensions so that demining of those areas could take place. The Second Review Conference on the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty will take place in Cartagena, Colombia in the week of 30 November 2009. [Read more](#).

Other news

Optimistic Beginnings?: Disarmament Commission Opens 2009 Session

Although the United Nations Disarmament Commission opened its 2009 substantive session on April 13th without an agreed agenda, some suggest there is cause for optimism. According to a recent press release from the UN, Commission Chairman Andrzej Towpik said that conditions for deliberations were much more favourable and expectations higher than in the previous session; this is credited to the growing number of disarmament initiatives and the recently announced intentions from President Obama and President Medvedev to start talks on arms reductions. At the opening, the High Representative for Disarmament, Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, said that in light of the financial crisis and given the demand of public opinion, states should consider reducing military spending. The commission is supposed to provide a forum for discussion of specific items, including nuclear weapons and conventional arms, with the goal of achieving consensus to create or strengthen disarmament recommendations for the General Assembly. However, as the body has been unable to adopt new guidelines for a full decade, many have questioned the Commission's usefulness. Currently, a proposal from the Non-Aligned Movement proposing the 2010s as the fourth UN Disarmament Decade is being discussed. Read more by clicking [here](#) or [here](#).

It Doesn't Take A Rocket Scientist: Understanding North Korea's Recent Launch

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out why North Korea just launched another rocket" writes John Feffer in *Foreign Policy in Focus*. North Korea, Feffer argues, is using its recent missile launch as a tool for political manoeuvring. Feffer outlines the possible motives behind the launch, its implications for regional and global security, as well as his perspective on appropriate responses. [Read the full piece](#). According to a recent article in *The Guardian*, the North Korean Deputy UN ambassador, Pak Tok Hun, has warned that his country will retaliate with strong steps if the UN Security Council takes action against the recent rocket launch. Mr. Tok Hun has accused the Security Council of being undemocratic by criticizing North Korea when it allows many other countries to launch satellites. [Read more](#).

Russian Experts Call On Obama To Re-Consider Conventional Weapons

According to the *Global Security Newswire*, on April 6th two Russian security experts have suggested that U.S. President Barack Obama consider a broader disarmament agenda which would include conventional weapons. The experts suggested that the Russian government may raise the issue of conventional weapons in the anticipated follow-up to the early April US-Russian negotiations over nuclear arms reductions. The U.S. Defense Department is exploring new technologies to develop a "Prompt Global Strike" weapon system that could be launched at a moment's notice against faraway targets, a possible alternative to launching a nuclear weapon. Despite reductions to the Missile Defense Agency budget of \$1.4 billion, the Pentagon is also seeking \$200 million to install missile shield technology on six warships aimed at protecting the country against China. Security experts from around the world have pointed out that investments in these conventional weapons systems are likely to continue to antagonize other nations and hinder nuclear disarmament efforts. Read full articles by clicking [here](#) or [here](#).

Russell Tribunal to Draw Attention to Issues of International Law in Israel-Palestinian Issue

A new civic initiative is being formed to reaffirm the primacy of international law as the basis for the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The activities will include a number of public sessions, public events as well as the Russell Tribunal which is based on the Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) of July 9th, 2004. Although having no official mandate, organizers are hopeful that the Tribunal's ability to mobilize public opinion will put pressure on governments around the world to promote a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Click [here](#) to see the Russell Tribunal's website.

Israel Feels Impact of Boycotts After Attacks on Gaza

According to *The Guardian*, Israeli companies are feeling the impact of recent boycott moves in Europe which followed the attack on Gaza. In a recent survey, the Israeli Manufacturers Association reported that 21% of 90 local exporters interviewed noticed a drop in demand due to boycotts, mainly from the UK and Scandinavian countries. Economics journalist, Nehemia Stressler noted that "the horrific images on TV and the statements of politicians in Europe and Turkey are changing the behaviour of consumers, businessmen, and potential investors". Boycotts have targeted food produce such as oranges, avocados, and herbs as well as pesticides and fertilizers. It is believed that consumer goods targeted by boycott campaigns represent around 3-5% of Israel's exports. Read the full article [here](#).

Resources

Men, Masculinity, and Guns: Can We Break the Link?

A new paper, presented at the Global Symposium "Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality" in Rio de Janeiro, argues that the constructions of masculinities and femininities work to legitimate the notion that a real man is one who is willing and able to coerce others through violent means. Ella Page's paper also addresses the broader social structures that perpetuate gun violence. The paper is available for download on the [International Action Network on Small Arms website](#).

War Profiteers Under the Microscope

The War Profiteers' Newsletter from War Resisters International offers dynamic stories, insightful commentaries, and special features on the arms trade. The latest edition features a recent nonviolent protest in Bilbao, Spain at the BBVA shareholders' meeting in which campaigners dressed in business attire painted themselves with red paint to symbolize the bloodshed caused by the bank's investments in the arms industry. The newsletter also includes powerful pictures from the recent arms fair in Abu Dhabi and a profile of Heckler & Koch, the world's second-largest manufacturer of handguns and other small arms. [Access the newsletter](#).

Conference Report Discusses U.S. Military Bases

From February 27 - March 2, more than 200 activists, scholars, and students from twelve nations gathered together at the national organizing conference of the Project on Military Bases held at the American University in Washington, D.C. The report from the conference, *Security Without Empire: U.S. National Organizing Conference on Military Bases Initial Report*, is now available for download [here](#).

Nobel Voices for Disarmament

The Smithsonian Folkways recently released c.d. *Nobel Voices for Disarmament: 1901-2001*, a stirring collection of new and archival spoken-word recordings by the most prominent advocates for peace during a century marred by war and bloodshed. With thirty-nine tracks organized into eight chapters, *Nobel Voices* offers testimonials from luminaries such as Kofi Annan, Bill Clinton, John F. Kennedy, Jane Addams, Jody Williams and Linus Pauling. *Nobel Voices* honors the achievements of the last century's Nobel Peace Prize winners in disarmament and arms control and those who have been inspired by their work. The c.d. contains a rare recording of IPB's past President Sean MacBride. Find out more [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](#).

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