

The Costs of Disarmament

In order to present the cost-benefit analysis of disarmament, UNIDIR proposes to take key countries as examples and carefully research what their commitments to disarmament treaties means to them in terms of financial and resource costs. In addition, the project will try to ascertain what each country perceives are the benefits brought to them through their participation in the agreements and whether there is consensus that there is a net gain to the state in question. The aim of the project is to achieve a better understanding of the costs and benefits of disarmament agreements with a view to assisting policy-makers decide how money is spent on such commitments, which budget lines are best structured to handle such spending and how states could approach this aspect of negotiations in the future.

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Information Technology Warfare

UNIDIR and the Department for Disarmament Affairs are jointly sponsoring a conference on "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" to be held in Geneva, from 25 to 27 August 1999. The object of this conference is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and views on the issues of information security, in particular with regard to unauthorized interference with or misuse of information and telecommunications systems and information resources, and the development of international principles that would enhance the security of global information and telecommunications systems and help to combat information

terrorism and criminality.

The conference will be a private, off-the-record two-day expert meeting, followed by a two-hour panel discussion on the third day that will be open to the public.

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Fissile Materials

In April 1999, UNIDIR published *Fissile Material Stocks: Characteristics, Measures and Policy Options* by William Walker and Frans Berkhout. The publication is intended to support the Conference on Disarmament in its thinking on the range of options available to deal with stocks of fissile material. Additionally, in early 1999, UNIDIR commissioned a report on fissile material inventories to provide an up-to-date account of fissile materials, assess national policies related to the production, disposition and verification of fissile materials, and identify facilities and locations which might be subject to safeguards under a treaty.

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Forming a North-South Alliance to Address Current Problems of Biological Warfare and Disarmament

The first conference of this project, "Biological Warfare and Disarmament: Problems, Perspectives, and Possible Solutions," held at the Palais des Nations in July 1998, brought together people with a wide range of academic and career backgrounds — scholars in international law, political science, economics, history and the biological sciences, members of non-governmental organizations committed to disarmament and the peaceful development of the biological sciences, and specialists on the Biological Weapons Convention — to address current dimensions of the biological warfare problem. A goal of the conference was to achieve broad geographical, and especially non-western, representation and to provide a space where non-western perspectives could be seriously presented and discussed. The conference ranged broadly over the history and politics of biological warfare and disarmament,

encompassing such questions as the recent history of biological warfare, the impacts of the United Nations Special Commission inspections of Iraq and their implications for the biological weapons regime, the influence of the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries on the regime, and the role of nuclear weaponry in shaping the regime. These questions are also explored in a symposium, drawing on selected conference papers, published in the March 1999 issue of *Politics and the Life Sciences*. More general legal, political and social dimensions of the biological warfare problem will be addressed in a book in progress. The project is supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the New England Biolabs Foundation and the University of Michigan.

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Peace-keeping in Africa: Meeting the Growing Demand

This project examines current efforts to develop African capacities to undertake peace-keeping and peace enforcement operations. The project will analyze the reasons for the United Nations Security Council's growing tendency to sub-contract the promotion of peace and security to others and will pay particular attention to regional and sub-regional organizations. It will also review Western and African attempts to make "burden-sharing" work and propose policies to strengthen peace-keeping in Africa. Particular attention will be paid to capacity-building efforts of the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations. UNIDIR will publish the project's conclusions as a monograph.

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UNIDIR Disarmament Seminars

UNIDIR occasionally holds small, informal meetings on various topics related to disarmament, security and non-proliferation. These off-the-record gatherings allow members of the disarmament community, missions and NGOs to have an opportunity to discuss a specific topic with an expert.

Topics covered thus far in 1999 include fissile materials, the prevention of war, peace-building in West Africa, reducing nuclear dangers, and biological and chemical weapons programmes.

Speakers at recent meetings have included William Walker, Ambassador Jonathan Dean, Michael Krepon and Peter Batchelor.

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DATARIs

In cooperation with SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), UNIDIR has developed an on-line database of research institutes and projects around the world. The database can be accessed through UNIDIR's website and institutes can update their information via a password.

If you would like for your institute to be included in DATARIs, please contact:

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Peace-building and Practical Disarmament in West Africa: Stimulating National Research

Under the heading of disarmament, development and conflict prevention, UNIDIR is currently developing a number of initiatives to promote peace and security in West Africa. UNIDIR's work in this region began with a conference co-hosted with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bamako, Mali in November 1996. The Government of the United Kingdom has generously contributed to this project.

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The Transfer of Dual-Use Outer-Space Technologies: Confrontation or Cooperation?

The right of every state to develop outer-space technologies, such as launching capabilities, orbiting satellites, planetary probes or ground-based equipment, is in principle unquestionable. In practice, however, problems arise when technology development approaches the very fine line between civil and military applications, largely because most of the technologies can be used for dual purposes. This dichotomy has raised a series of political, military and other concerns that affect the transfer of outer-space technologies in different ways, particularly between established and emerging space-competent states. Accordingly, for many years several states have sought ways to curb the transfer of specific dual-use outer-space technologies, specifically launcher technology, while still allowing some transfer of these technologies for civil use. The results of this research will be published by UNIDIR.

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Study Group on Ammunition and Explosives

The Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, which was established on 12 December 1995 by General Assembly resolution 50/70 B, delivered its report to the Secretary-General in July 1997. One of the recommendations of this report stated that "The United Nations should initiate a study on the problems of ammunition and explosives in all their aspects." Following this recommendation, a Study Group on Ammunition and Explosives was established by the Secretary-General pursuant to operative paragraph 3 of resolution 52/38J on "Small Arms". This group, chaired by Ms. Silvia Cucovaz (Argentina) held its first meeting at the invitation of the Department of Disarmament Affairs in New York on 27 April–1 May 1998. Two of the eight members of the Study Group are from UNIDIR: Dr. Christophe Carle and Lt.Col. Ilkka Tiihonen.

The Group's task is to assist in the preparation of the Secretary-General's report, to be submitted to the 54th session of the General Assembly. The final report is expected to be ready in summer 1999 prior to the opening of the General Assembly.

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UNIDIR Handbook on Arms Control

UNIDIR is producing a handbook that will explain the major concepts and terms relating to arms control. The handbook will be used as both a primer for an audience with limited familiarity with arms control and as a reference for students, scholars, diplomats and journalists who are more experienced in arms control matters.

The handbook will be organized as a thematically structured glossary of approximately 200 terms relating to arms control. Each term is situated within its wider context so that, on the one hand, a specific term can be looked up quickly, and on the other hand, an entire issue can be covered. Cross-references to other terms and concepts will point the reader to relevant related issues. The researcher designing and drafting the handbook will be assisted by an editorial committee consisting of regional and arms control experts.

The handbook will be published in 1999, in English and Arabic. It might be translated into other languages at a later stage.

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Geneva Forum

Together with the Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies of the Graduate Institute of International Studies and the Quaker United Nations Office, UNIDIR organizes an ongoing discussion series called Geneva Forum. Thanks to the generous support of the Government of Switzerland, Geneva Forum focuses on issues related to small arms and light weapons. Invited speakers will deal with specific thematic and/or regional dimensions of the issue. Geneva Forum is an occasional seminar held at the Palais des Nations that addresses contemporary issues. The series targets the local missions and organizations in an effort to disseminate information on a range of security and disarmament topics. The series seeks to act as a bridge between the international research community and Geneva-based diplomats and journalists.

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