

Research Staff Collegium
Thursday 23 April, 14.30

via Zoom



Agenda

1. Minutes of the last meeting and any matters arising

No issues arose from the last meeting in February.

2. Covid-19: Update and questions

There are no updates regarding Covid-19 from SMT. SIPRI staff should continue to work together to adapt to the challenges arising from Covid. This includes reaching out to colleagues to support one another and maintaining the feeling of community through virtual or in-person fikas for example (while maintaining the appropriate physical distance).

3. Governing Board meeting: 25-26 May

- ***Agenda***

Sigrún walked the meeting through the agenda. The board meeting will take place virtually, with Dan, Sigrún, and Jan moderating from the conference room at SIPRI. The virtual format means that the length of the board meeting has been reduced. If Covid restrictions continue, then SIPRI will have to consider increasing the number of board meetings to increase accountability.

All staff are invited to attend the open session discussion on Covid on the afternoon of May 25, which consists of Q&A between staff and board members because of the virtual format.

As staff representative to the board, Malin invited and encouraged staff members to reach out to her with comments and feedback that they would like her to express to the board.

- ***New Governing Board member(s)***

Ramtane Lamamra has been confirmed as the new governing board member. The announcement has been published on SIPRI's website and it will be promoted through SIPRI's social media channels.

The two individuals being considered for membership on SIPRI's board are Ms. Hu Shuli and Dr. Marty Natalegawa. A majority of board members are

leaning in favor of Ms. Shuli partly because they know her and partly because having a Chinese board member who is independent would be an advantage. There are sensitivity concerns about having a Chinese board member that need to be considered further.

There was also concern expressed regarding nominating another Indonesian member, since the outgoing member is also Indonesian.

4. Covid-19 and possible future SIPRI research questions and issues: discussion

Governance & Society

Marina is writing an essay about the dual crises of health and the economy, and how they will affect the Global North and South. There are three potential lines of inquiry for SIPRI:

- Global governance and the failure of global governance
- Inequality in developing and developed countries, both within and between states
- Building resilience within states and within the global system. This line can be addressed through various clusters and issue areas

Armament & Disarmament

The team has submitted several proposals and concept notes:

- Concept note on biorisks submitted to the German Federal Foreign Office. This is in line with SIPRI's strategy to re-engage with biorisks. Covid presents an opportunity to focus on issues such as biorisks before they get on the policy agenda.
- Proposal with the University of Hamburg to increase representation of natural scientists at SIPRI
- Proposal for the Stockholm Security Conference on nationalism and Covid-19. One angle to take is that countries are becoming more protectionist with regards to access to technology.

COVID has increased the discussions on cybersecurity since there seems to have been an increase in cyber attacks, especially since hospitals might be vulnerable, e.g., hackers threatening to shut down hospitals. And given the amount of disinformation that has been circulating on Covid, there's potential to work on how states manage the information space (following up on past research for JICA).

A final topic is a foresight exercise with MSB to explore and develop a methodology for the implications of technological development and societal risks. SIPRI can partner with the Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford University on this.

Arms & Military Expenditure

The AMEX team cannot make predictions on how military spending will change as a result of Covid. But they observed that after the financial crisis in 2008, military spending was cut. Given that today's economic crisis will be more severe than the 2008 crisis, AMEX expects that there will be consequences. However, there are other factors at play, as, for example, the arms industry sector could play a role in stimulus

packages to restart the economy when the crisis ends.

Climate Change & Risk

There is an ongoing conversation in the Mistra Geopolitics programme to think about how new forms of investment will boost the economy after the acute Covid crisis passes. This will provide opportunities to make long-term adjustments with regards to climate change and the structural changes required to cope with the effects of climate change. There are also ongoing discussions with MSB to discuss the implications of Covid for their work.

A proposal to understand how international environmental governance institutions react to crises has been submitted through Formas (partnering with Stockholm University).

European Security

There will be a reassessment of international health regulations and the systems for their implementation after the acute crisis phase passes. Covid has revealed the weaknesses in disease surveillance systems at the national level, in addition to how reporting is done since it relies on accurate, voluntary submissions to international organizations. Based on this, one area for research is examining disease surveillance systems and how international health regulations work.

A second area for research is re-assessing the relationship between EU states and the EU. The initial reaction to Covid was inward, but within a few weeks there was collaboration between EU states, so we need to be careful about drawing conclusions regarding resurgent nationalism.

5. The Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development 2020: update

Registration for the Forum will open next week. The Forum will take place online and will run from 11-22 May.

6. AOB

Julian Perry Robinson, who was a former SIPRI staff member passed away. SIPRI will add an 'In Memoriam' for him on its website.