

A&D Cluster meeting – Monday 8 April

Where: Conference + zoom

When/duration: 14.00-15.00. **60 min**

Agenda

1. – Update from other clusters and teams (15 min)

Purpose: Representatives from other clusters and other teams can use the opportunity to briefly share important updates — i.e. things that could not simply be put in the email.

Speaking order: 1) Outreach, 2) Human Resources, 3) Operations - Grant and Acquisitions Office (Frederic) (new funding opportunities?) and GMO (Nikos) 4) Director's office, 4) PD Cluster, 5) CPS Cluster, 6) EUNPDC report.

2. Horizon scanning (15 min)

- Purpose: Identify world developments that are or could affect the work of the cluster.
- Guiding question: What world development is particularly preoccupying your team right now?
- How it will work: Each programme is invited to reflect in advance. A team member will report on behalf the programme. Each team gets 3 min. **Note:** Representatives from other clusters and other teams (HR, outreach etc) are welcome to participate in the exercise but not mandated to.

Speaking order: 1) Arms Transfers Programme, 2) Dual-Use and Arms Trade Control Programme, 3) Governance of Artificial Intelligence Programme, 4) Military Expenditure and Arms Production Programme, 5) Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme.

Working and learning together: Presentation: China and Asia Security Programme - priorities – Jingdong Yuan (30 min)

Guiding questions:

1. What aspects/issues regarding China and Asia are you interested in and relevant to your themes of research?
2. Areas of collaboration for research and funding

Notes

Update from other clusters and teams.

Outreach

- Outreach could not attend but mentioned all was going well with preparations towards the milex data launch on 22 April.

Human Resources

- Information related to the upcoming MTR process was highlighted. Moreover, there is an ambition to change the timelines for the PAD process and get this closer to the salary revision dates.
- Hailey's utility as an information sharing tool continues to evolve and notifications will be coming to our e-mail. Staff are reminded it is important to provide emergency contact information and especially if travelling for SIPRI this information is needed. You will get contact via Hailey about this. Hailey will also be used for employment agreements. This is first being tested in Operations.
- There is a new cooperation agreement now in place and one will find this information on the SIPRI intranet soon under HR.
- A new finance manager will be starting in May.
- The salary analysis by gender that is mandatory in Sweden is starting now.

Operations

- Fred is now leading the Grant and Acquisitions department.
- There was a reminder about an e-mail circulated by finance to let vendors and those involved to submit any expenses for the first quarter so this period can be closed.
- There are deadlines and reports due for some projects at the end of April and in May - relevant project leaders will be contacted.
- The Grant and Acquisitions department are developing new processes to manage the proposal phase. There will be meetings with the research teams and details will be circulated in due course.

Directors Office

- Dan and Caroline will be in New York City on 16-17 April for a high-level event co-organized with the Permanent Missions of Germany and Guyana.
- On 22 April, Dan will be meeting with some ambassadors, including the UK ambassador, the Armenian ambassador, and the Irish ambassador among others. Contact if you want to know more.

CPS

- On 9 April, CPS will have their next cluster meeting - and they will use this opportunity to discuss input into the recruitment of the next SIPRI Director.
- The cluster will also hear from finance for an update on the current financial situation.

P&D

- Nothing to report.

EUNPDC

- A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) working group has been established in the consortium. There are interesting thoughts and reflections from this group and suggested as something to discuss further at a future cluster meeting.
- Ambassador Stephan Klemnet has been appointed EU Special Envoy for Disarmament and Non-proliferation in February 2024.
- To those who may be invited as participants or speakers - the consultative meeting (annual meeting in the European context) will take place on Monday 10 June (dedicated to WMD, SALW issues) and Thursday 13 June (dedicated to COARM issues). FRS have opened it up for suggestions to the agenda.
- The proliferation on-line course call has been circulated multiple times (deadline for applications is 1 May) and this is taking place from 27-31 May. It will be focused on chemical biological weapons issues.
- On the Ad Hoc seminar series – the next one being organised is on the topic of AI plus chem/bio issues (Jules leading) on 19 April. The one after this will be on AI and nuclear nexus and taking place at the end of May.

SMT

- There is new travel security advice from IT on the SIPRI intranet – staff are advised to read before travelling again.
- There was a discussion on SIPRI associates, and a need for greater gender and geographical diversity.
- There was an agreement by SMT that it was acceptable to take in a royalty payment from the arms industry for our database use.

Horizon scanning

Arms Transfers Programme

- It was reported the story of Hanwah trying to acquire Austal in Australia was of interest.

DUAT

- A news story was highlighted that was Australia related - who since the beginning of April reinforced screening measures for international students and researchers coming to study or work in the critical technology field. AI, hypersonic, quantum related study/work are covered by these measures. It's reflective of a wider move by states (Netherlands also mentioned) implementing such screening measures to strengthen both economic and national security.

GovAI

- The use of AI to select targets in Gaza was highlighted as a recent news story of interest. An AI system known as 'Lavender' has reportedly been used by Israeli intelligence to produce a list of human targets and instrumental in leading to the large numbers of civilian casualties in Gaza. Another system highlighted called the 'Gospel' is reported being used to produce lists of locations. There are many other AI systems and more developments and information coming out all the time.

Obviously, this news story is of relevance to the work of the team – who are analysing what is being reported and how it is being reported.

MILAP

- The team are busy with preparations for the milex data launch on 22 April as they try to cover what is happening around the entire globe. Apart from what is happening in the Ukraine and Middle East some highlights mentioned are Sweden joining NATO. This is also related to the whole NATO burden sharing discussion and how more member states are reaching their 2% obligation. Finland had a huge hike in milex spending to reach 2%, and Sweden is currently still under. The last couple of months was the quarter where a lot of the largest military spenders are releasing their approbations and budgets for 2024/25. The research is showing that trends for increasing milex spending is going to go on and accelerate.
- The crisis in Haiti was reported as reflecting a larger trend seen in Latin America in how internal security conditions is driving milex spending. The crisis in Haiti has spilt over to the Dominican Republic and now in Mexico, Honduras, and Ecuador governments are using the military to tackle security problems with gang violence and organised crimes. The point made is domestic tensions and problems is the source of increased milex spending in the region rather than international tensions.

WMD

- There were several blips on the radar since the last cluster meeting on the topic of small modular reactors (SMRs). SMRs are new reactors designed mostly for electricity generation, and are much smaller than normal nuclear power plants, and for this reason described as much safer and easier to operate and require less workforce. The trend are SMRs are going to be more like batteries than reactors and there will be a lot of them built across the globe, including in remote locations. It's usually said that nuclear power plants do not release green house gasses when they operate and therefore can contribute to slowing down climate change. However, there is a possible reverse relationship in that SMRs are not tested yet against extreme weather events – and described as a problem not really addressed yet. The issues related to this and SMRs being set in many and various locations and possible security vulnerabilities was described. This is something on the programme horizon to work on now among other things.

Working and learning together: Presentation: China and Asia Security Programme - priorities – Jingdong Yuan

- Jingdong presented an overview on the current research work and what the aspirations are in the near term. The programme research examines – 1) Political economy and geoeconomics 2) Development and peacebuilding 3) Defense and foreign policy. This was followed by Q&A with A&D cluster.

AOB

Next cluster meeting is TBC.