

Note taker: Noel Kelly

### **SIPRI Armament and Disarmament Cluster Meeting**

Monday 15 January 2024 - **@14:00PM** in SIPRI seminar room and Zoom.

#### **Participants:**

Sibylle Bauer, Stephanie Blenckner, Joey Fox, Wilfred Wan, Mathew George, Giovanna Maletta, Vincent Boularin, Alexander Blanchard, Laura Bruun, Nan Tian, Diego Lopes, Lorenzo Scarazzato, Xiao Liang, Wilfred Wan, Tytti Erästö, Nivedita Raju, Vladislav Chernavskikh, Siemon Wezeman, Katarina Djokic, Zain Hussain, Lauriane Héau, Kolja Brockmann (on-line), Lora Saalman (on-line), Larisa Saveleva Dovgal (on-line), Nikos Politis, Priscilla Frimpong Boateng, John Batho, Frank Esparraga, Amelie Lutz, Lucas Wiktorsson, Vongai Murugani, Simon Herrman, Noah Heinemann.

Time	Topic	Notes
14:00	(1) Intro	WMD Horizon Scan
14:05	(2) Questions on A&D reporting	Check  2024 MMM Reporting.docx (more info coming by Monday)
14:10	(3) Cross-programme issue and learning together	25 mins each.  Topic 1: Maps as Outreach Tools  Topic 2: A More Holistic Picture of Military Capabilities  (See questions to think about in advance in our e-mail message)
15:00	(5) Reporting from other clusters and teams	CPS and PD Clusters Director's Office Human Resources Operations Outreach (Communications/Events Editorial) EUNPDC

Meeting ends @ 15:30PM.

#### WMD Horizon Scan

- This horizon scan is about highlighting recent news stories that may have relevance in the cluster. The first topic was on the recent spate of GPS jamming that effected Scandinavia and large parts of Europe and this issue is also affecting other regions including Asia and Middle East.
- The second topic highlighted was on the Middle East, referencing a recent story from the New York Times that suggested one of the rockets fired by Hamas on 7 October

struck an Israeli base where nuclear missiles are kept. The report said that despite fires around the base it didn't reach weaponry. It highlights a couple of issues; one in the policy community we tend to under consider Israel's nuclear status because of its opacity around its nuclear weapons programme and because it is the only nuclear armed state in the region. This has risks including understandings of stockpile safety and security and attempts to address these, as well as signalling strategic consequences that can result from conventional attacks such as these.

- Another source of risk pointed to is the web of alliances that is taking place in the Middle East that can drive a wider conflict. This includes extra regional nuclear armed states or just fundamentally, these alliances can complicate the military operations that could have unintended consequences and we're seeing some of that.
- The Gaza conflict could have implications for the Iran nuclear issue because after the war started, there's been also this kind of proxy war between the US and Iran backed groups in Syria and disturbances in Iraq also. Most recently we have seen the US and UK carry out airstrikes in Yemen in response to the Houthis targeting ships in the region in response to what Israel is doing in in Gaza. The link to the Iran nuclear issues is that Iran and the U.S. had an informal understanding last year. They haven't really publicised it, but it was reported in the New York Times last June. It is reported the U.S. and Iran have they have an understanding to de-escalate, or at least to avoid the worst kind of escalation. This mutual step falls short of going back to the negotiations restore the JCPOA, but many experts had thought this development could pave the way for new JCPOA talks after the U.S. elections if Biden wins. In autumn, there was an exchange of prisoners, and then the U.S. agreed to unfreeze some Iranian assets, but they also agreed not to target or refrain from proxy attacks in Syria, so that part of the agreement has already crumbled.
- In the coming year, the second meeting of the States Parties to the TPNW (Treaty on the Prohibition nuclear weapons), decided to establish an intercessional consultative process chaired by Austria. This will involve the States Parties and signatures to the Treaty and some other stakeholders, like the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the TPNW Scientific Advisory Group. The plan is to hold discussions throughout the year and develop reports to be presented at the next meeting of States Parties (March 2025) which will seek to challenge the security paradigm based on nuclear deterrence, by highlighting and promoting new scientific evidence about the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons, juxtaposing this with risks and assumptions that are inherent in nuclear deterrence. A long way of saying that it's an attempt to challenge the narrative nuclear deterrence from the disarmament perspective. This is important because it marks a big development in this space. It is a first concerted effort by the non-EU weapon nuclear weapons states to have a comprehensive overview of the cost of deterrence and how it influences disarmament, non-proliferation and challenging that.
- Last December, the Russian segment of the international monitoring system for the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty organization was completed with installation of the thirty second station in Russia.

#### Questions on A&D reporting

- No further questions from Monday morning report.

#### Topic 2: A More Holistic Picture of Military Capabilities (facilitated by Tytti)

- This topic was about what a more holistic picture of military capabilities might look like. This was influenced by the two projects worked on by Tytti that have focused on the so-called nuclear umbrella States, and where a part of both projects looked at the relationship between conventional and nuclear deterrence. A big scale monitoring project of all country's inventories would be difficult to make work but other interesting project ideas are thought possible.

#### Reporting from other clusters and teams

##### Conflict, Peace, and Security Cluster

- On Thursday 18 January, the China and Asia team have invited staff to a brown bag seminar of the topic of 'Ukrainian Agriculture in Wartime' followed with a Q/A. The invitation has been circulated by Lucas.
- The Sahel team is starting a new study for the European Parliament and have also signed a research agreement together with [XCEPT](#) and this will mean further recruitment.
- CPS organised many workshops in December 2023, and now the Programme Director's for all teams are bringing thoughts together on research agendas and how these fits into fundraising efforts and the five-year strategy for SIPRI.

##### Peace and Development Cluster

- P&D will have an away day tomorrow (16 January).
- On the Forum – today was decision day on the selection of session proposals.

##### Directors Office

- Dan, Joakim, and Sepideh are travelling and in Geneva and going to Davos. Stephanie will also be going to Davos.
- We are collaborating in preparations for the upcoming visit of NIS on 6 February to meet with A&D.

##### Human Resources

- We welcomed new arrival to the Human Resources team, Simon Herrman.

##### EUNPDC Report

- Network membership is currently 112 (including 6 consortium members from the EUNPD Network).
- The EUNPDC Annual Conference took place from 1-5 December, Giovanna chaired a session and Sibylle gave opening and closing remarks. From SIPRI, Jules, Pieter and Vladislav also attended.

- The next EUNPDC Annual Conference is scheduled for 12-13 November 2024 (save the date).
- SIPRI hosted the EUNPDC non-proliferation course from the 28-30 November with Vitaly as project lead.
- On 23 November 2023, SIPRI organised a EUNPDC ad hoc seminar about EU arms exports controls with Giovanna as project lead and hosted in Brussels.
- There will be an annual EUNPD Network meeting on 9 February. The network members will be discussing ways to promote diversity and inclusivity in their institutes.
- The process of commissioning two more EUNPDC papers, one on the impact of emerging and disruptive technologies in nuclear deterrence, and another one on the nexus of non-traditional security and nuclear risks in the Indo-Pacific.
- IISS (The International Institute for Strategic Studies) will be starting a promotional campaign for the podcast series. If you have participated and recorded, then look out for this. IISS are still looking for further contributions requesting ideas for topics and experts. Message Vladislav if interested!
- In June 2024, there will be a consultative meeting and the next phase of the EUNPDC project is being planned and worked on. The plan is to be finalised in September 2024.
- Ad hoc seminars – one more is being developed and there is scope for two more and six virtual ones. A request was received from EEAS (European External Action Service) to do a series around the topic of AI (probably four). The details are still being discussed and Sibylle will be in touch with Vincent as part of these discussions.

#### Outreach (Editorial -> Comms -> Events -> Library)

- Gave a presentation about how they work and who were the points of contact.

The top points to remember.

- **All editorial planning** including **visuals** - Joey
- **All event planning** including online - Marti
- **All strategic planning** - Steph
- **Print stock, orders, business cards** - Emma
- **Media inquiries** - Mimmi and Amelie
- **Commentaries** - Caspar
- **Staff photo and web bio** - Amelie

#### Operations

- Information about updates in Maconomy was shared in an email to all staff. From January 1, 2024, absence, and internal time (core time) must be reported in a different way than before (see email sent on 12 January to all staff).
- There will be some effort to strengthen the grants part of the institute (strengthening the team and improving processes).

- The strategic grant of 15 million SEK for 2024 has been secured but this is a further reduction from 20 million SEK secured in 2023, and 32 million SEK in 2022. Times are challenging and we are advised to focus further on external funding during 2024.
- Apart from meetings with Programme Directors each month, it is requested to have more cooperation with all project managers this year, and to follow up on the project budget spending versus actuals each month. The intention from the PMO is to have this information available in Maconomy soon for project managers to access.

AOB

- SIPRI Associate Researcher Matt Korda, with the WMD team is in town this week to participate in the Space/Nuclear workshop.
- Our next cluster meeting will be on Monday, 5 February.