

Note taker: Noel Kelly

SIPRI Armament and Disarmament Cluster Meeting

Monday 5 February 2024 - **@14:00PM** in SIPRI conference room and Zoom.

Agenda

1. Icebreaker / Horizon scanning (20 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. The team member whose birthday is the closest to Sweden's *Semla day* (a.k.a Fettisdagen on 13 February) will report on behalf of 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.

2. Working and learning together: workshop interactivity (30 min)

What: In this working and learning together we invite colleagues to reflect and share their experience attending, designing, and delivering interactive workshops.

Purpose: Discuss the do's and don'ts of interactive workshop's design, delivery, and after action.

How it will work: Open discussion for the entire cluster. The discussion will be moderate by Jules.

Guiding questions:

- Can you give an example of an event in which you participated that went either really well or really badly? What were the ingredients of the success/failure?
- What are for you the do's and don't's of interactive workshops?
 - Before (prep for workshops) - What are the good practices when prepping for an interactive workshop?
 - During (delivery) - What is a good interactive workshop? Is participation the same as interaction? How to foster interactivity?
 - After (after action) - How do you know if it was meaningful? What could be the "valuable" outcomes of a workshop (beyond a great evaluation form)?

3. Good to know – update from other clusters and teams (10 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 Manager (new funding opportunities?) and GMO (Nikos) 4) Director's office, 4) PD Cluster, 5) CPS Cluster, 6) EUNPDC report.

Notes

GovAI

Alex reported that at Davos a point was made about the unintended effects of AI, its possible consequences, and how much of a risk this was for the world. However, last week we also saw the consequences of an intentional misuse of AI (Taylor Sift story). There's a few things going on here, apart from the usual story about social media, and the story about how Microsoft and X have reduced their responsible AI teams or teams for moderation. There's also concern about the upcoming U.S. presidential elections, and what this type of tool combined with social media coverage is going to do and what that means for the kind of trust in the democratic process. What's interesting for the GovAI team is that it demonstrates a vulnerability of generative AI to misuse. Why is this important to us? Because increasingly generative AI is being used in platforms developed for military purposes. More generally, this raises the questions of the vulnerability of these systems.

ATP

Siemon reported on several interesting things that happened in the last few weeks. The topic of ships being reluctant to enter in the Red Sea was referenced. We see ships turning back because of military actions but the story is clouded a little bit, and other things are happening where Iran attacked rebels in Pakistan, and Pakistan reacted by attacking rebel camps in Iran. The use of weapons against rebels is one thing without taking into consideration that these attacks happen to be on somebody else's territory. And the use of weapons by rebels who got them in ways which are diffuse and certainly illegal. Some of these issues and stories are developing and we can also have further discussions on.

WMD

Wilfred reported that one of the things that made the news recently is that a German MEP, who is still leader of the European People's Party, is expected to come first in the European Parliament elections in June, and basically called for Europe to build its own nuclear deterrent and said, quote, "we all know that when push comes to shove the nuclear option is really decisive". Discussions about an indigenous European nuclear deterrent is not new, so not just the weapons that the U.S. has stationed in Europe. Our colleague, Barbara Kunz has written about this topic. In 2022, France said it was open to discussing it's the role and nuclear arsenal for collective security in Europe, and invited partners to take part in group exercises and so forth. What makes it a little different now is the sense of urgency, one having to do obviously with events in Ukraine, and concerns about Europe's military capacities and defense industry. There are also concerns about actual U.S. commitment to Europe, especially with the possibility of a second Trump presidency on the horizon. This speaks to the wider pattern of dialogue around nuclear weapons in Europe, whether it's Poland calling for nuclear sharing or to take part in nuclear sharing or whether it's the U.S. talking about stationing nuclear weapons in UK for first time in 15 years. All this is concerning from the perspective of nuclear risk obviously, but also about what it means for the global nuclear order, and especially since at the last NPT Review Conference, China had made a particular big deal of kind of nuclear sharing arrangements and issues that arise. This just speaks to lessening possibilities for nuclear diplomacy.

DUAT

Giovanna reported on recent topics of interest to the team and how this impacts the work DUAT does. The first one being the strategic competition between U.S.A. and China, and how this impacts the work of the multi-lateral export regimes, especially considering criticism coming from different parts.

The most significant is actions China has conducted in the context of UN General Assembly, First Committee, and to the resolutions on peaceful purposes. The second one is the conflict in Ukraine. This has raised two different challenges in relation to DUAT research work. The first one has seen the increasingly difficult to enforce and implement the trade regulated aspects of sanctions. This has become more complex, especially after the adoption of the wider sector sanctions on Russia and Belarus. This represents some of the main challenges also for western based companies. The conflict is also having a negative impact on the implementation enforcement also of the embargos. It's becoming particularly concerning when you have Russia as a P5 member being accused of violating arms control sanctions.

The conflict in the Middle East is of course impacting. From a regulatory point of view, military support to Israel would possibly become under more scrutiny. Arms trade toward Israel may raise tensions - especially as some weapons may be found to be used in violations of IHL and war crimes. Again, coming back to the Ukraine, we see a change to the narrative in terms of arms trade control. In Brussels, the Europeans are taking more of a role in funding of transfers for support systems and facilitating joint procurement or joint arms production.

MILAP

Diego reported on recent topics of interest and how MILAP concerns are linked to different articles published recently. One such article (Foreign Affairs) referenced today was about how Germany races for decades of confrontation with Russia. The team talked about military spending in this context, in terms of reporting and documenting that, but also facts. More practically this changes a lot the funding landscape. What types of projects are they going to pursue in this new context also, considering SIPRI's mandate, which is to improve the prospects of disarmament. How do we do this when you know discussions about reduction of military spending has fallen away?

The second article referenced (Foreign Affairs) is also about that wave of increases but has to do with Russia, and the sustainability of its military spending spree. It was referenced how the economic performance of Russia in 2023 was unexpected but also talked about the relationship of military spending and inflation. This was a topic highlighted by MILAP before, how European countries will increase their military spending in nominal terms but because of inflation this is lower. MILAP have discussed if countries will try to outpace inflation to have real increases in their military spending. This has a consequence, more public or military spending also effects inflation – if you try to outpace inflation then you are just creating a cycle (hypothesis that has been discussed and developing).

The third article referenced (Foreign Affairs) is described as a general one, touching on all the trends recently mentioned and talks about the next global war, and it tries to draw parallels between pre-second World War and what we're living now and how regional crisis are kind of interlinked. We can discuss whether these parallels are reasonable or not, but one thing raised for MILAP is that SIPRI is described as very much a cold war beast. Especially this cluster, as we're talking about measuring armaments and providing information but having in mind the deterrence and the risks of misperception. Even in the nineties, SIPRI had a role. What is our position now? Yes, we can discuss whether we're going towards a global war or not, but things are worse, and I think we all agree on that. Do we keep doing what we're doing? Do we change things? We are invited to think and discuss if one has any thoughts about this? What would SIPRI's role be in world at war? We do not have the time to open for a proper discussion here but there's room for maybe a cluster discussion at some stage.

Wrap up horizon scanning.

All presentations linked to higher level geopolitical developments, and we can make room to discuss more on this at our A&D away day on 18 March.

Working and learning together: workshop interactivity

In our work here we design, deliver, and attend a lot of workshops. It's part of our day-to-day job. For example, in January, the cluster had two workshops in SIPRI, one on autonomous weapons, and the other one on space and nuclear. Next week (w.7), Vincent and Jules will go to Tallin to deliver a workshop with colleagues from ODA, with a plan to deliver a couple of more times this year. This discussion is on the process, lesson learned, and making workshops a more interactive experience.

There are many ways we can think about workshops. They can be part of a research project, where you gather some experts and just confirm something new or implant thoughts. They can be capacity building workshops with key stakeholders, or they can have an educational vocation with students or larger audiences. There are different types of workshops and the GovAI team will always like to try to make them interactive when developing them.

Workshops are important because they can be part of the process in the research or to help inform an outcome. They can be also a deliverable or part of a deliverable in a research project. It's better to sell an interactive workshop than to sell just a workshop. It can be difficult to get or design this interactivity so that's the reason to have this conversation.

Many of us attend the workshops, many of us design and deliver workshops. This discussion sought to chat about best practices when it comes to designing and conducting the workshops. What are best practices when it comes to what happens after the workshop? How do we follow up and how do we make sure that the workshop has been valuable beyond the evaluation form for the people that invited?

A specific framing and questions in advance can help to get the conversation more focused and interactive. In some workshop experiences, it was suggested a session with a more general title can also lead to a lot of discussion, but in the end not sure what is the main takeaway.

Meetings or workshops in person or online can be a bit of work to put it into a two-page memo but still seen as useful to have a written report.

Important to get the amount of information right that you want to send to the participants. You don't want to be sending a 10-page document but at the same time one wants to inform as much as possible. Clearly there's a balance to be found there. This is way better when one has a specific framing, and you can inform the participants as much as you can beforehand without an overload of information.

To have a very smooth and natural interactive conversation one needs to plan a lot before, both in terms of the organizers and by interacting in advance with participants. One really needs to think about the way the agenda is structured, and what you want to get out of it. Therefore, interacting with participants in advance helps. It can be quite a lot of preparation, but the payoff can be worth it.

There is a balance and the experience of attending a seminar or workshop that is too pre-cooked could lead to frustration on the part of most participants, because too much has already been decided in how it should go.

Don'ts – it is frustrating when there is a lack of purpose, and the organiser doesn't really know what they want to get out of this exercise. One can see questions on the agenda that are not necessarily connected, or the moderator is not doing the right job of finding the thread in the discussion.

In a session, it's about finding a balance and having a clear purpose where the participants know what is expected and they can contribute to the discussion, making the best use of their time. The preparation is about kind of empowering participants to invest their own ideas and their own wishes into the seminar as opposed to being just a body in the room. Into this pre-cooked. It is suggest having a session with breakout rooms does help to promote fuller discussions as it makes especially people who are not inclined more inclined to take part in a conversation if it's in a smaller setting.

Doing an icebreaker at the start of a workshop to get people to engage is worth putting thought into. It is suggested having a welcome dinner on the evening participants arrive is excellent opportunity for this activity and can save time at an actual workshop. Where interactive workshops are most important is in trust and relationship building. Some thought needs beforehand as well as during the workshop, but also in the part of the evaluation, is how hierarchies are navigated in these spaces. There are different hierarchies that agenda visualize, but especially around seniority, hierarchies between different actors and stakeholders. Hierarchies of different types of knowledge or types of expertise that are valued. One needs to really think how to use interactive methods to navigate them.

A good chair/moderator can really help make a good interactive workshop and it's important to consider who does this role when preparing for workshop. So essentially a person needs to have a particular skill set, that is not only good at introducing the topic but also knows the purpose and putting the questions into context and finding the thread. The point is made that the composition of participants is important – avoid the traveling circus (same faces) – it's important to bring in new people or a combination of different people so that when something new is heard they respond, and that makes it quite interactive.

Report backs from other departments.

Outreach

The focus now on upcoming data launches and especially arms transfers. The general sense is all is on track for the new arms transfers data release on 11 March.

Human Resources

A new HR-manager (Clarisa Fuentes Eliasson) will start with SIPRI in March.

Director's Office

The NIS visit to SIPRI to meet with the A&D cluster is on tomorrow (6 Feb), and all preparations have been made. We are expecting 14 from NIS and we will be 46 participants in total.

See below a list of Dan's travels and meetings with ambassadors planned (for now) in Feb and March. If there is someone, you'd like Dan to meet in any of the locations or something you'd like him to raise during his meetings, please let Priscilla and Sepideh know, at the latest a week before the meeting.

- 12-15 Feb: Rome (fighting food crisis along the HDP (Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding) nexus. Also, meetings with WFP.

- 16-18 Feb: Munich for the Munich Security Conference (if you're wondering if someone specific will be at the conference, please check with Director's office).
- 20 Feb: Meeting with Australian Ambassador in Stockholm.
- 21 Feb: SMT Away day.
- 22 – 23 Feb: Dan is working on SIPRI Yearbook.
- 27-28 Feb: Washington DC (27 Feb at the World Bank Fragility Forum).
- 29 Feb to 1 Mar: New York. Meeting with Carnegie Corporation and reaching out to the Ford Foundation.
- 4 Mar: Dan will meet with the new Republic of Korea Ambassador in Stockholm.
- 6 Mar: RSC
- 9-11 Mar: Nagasaki. Dan will be speaking at a symposium organised by Nagasaki University.
- On 13-15 March: Stefan and Joakim are in Japan for the Tokyo Conference, and Stefan will be giving a keynote address.
- Armenian Ambassador – TBC.

Operations

Nikos reported that the auditors will be going over the accounts for 2023, and are in SIPRI from tomorrow (6 Feb). If you have any questions for the PMO - Programme Directors are advised to get in touch.

EUNPDC

We now have 113 members in the Network with Martin Luther University from Germany being the latest to join. The annual network meeting is on 9th February. They will be discussing the promotional diversity among network connections. The EEAS have requested a series of ad hoc seminars with four requested in total, and all on the topic of the military application of AI and there will be briefings for EU member states. The first one will be on AI and conventional weapons, to be held on the 23 February. There will be one on AI and Bio/Chem, and one on AI and nuclear weapons before the summer break, and the fourth is to be decided. These are planned to be virtual two-hour seminars and Sibylle will send a message around to find a time for those who are directly involved.

A person that we have worked with a lot, Marjolijn van Deelen, is now the EU Special Envoy for Space, as of last Thursday (1 Feb).

Staff Observer

RSC representatives are being sought. There is currently still no volunteers for RSC representatives, and the request now is for two nominations from each cluster by 23 February. By the next RSC on 6 March, there needs to be at least two nominations for RSC representatives.

AOB

The next A&D cluster meeting is on 4 March.