

## News and Activities 1

December 2005

Since its inauguration two years ago, the Hamburg Centre for Biological Arms Control has grown into a vibrant research unit. With a staff of three life scientists and one political scientist, the Centre developed a strong research profile with a focus on verification and compliance, and initiated a variety of outreach activities in Germany and internationally. With this first – of hopefully a long series – of activity reports, we wish to create a medium to inform colleagues and friends of events, activities and developments at the Hamburg Centre.

Additional information, copies of the publications and regular activity updates are available on our new website: [www.biological-arms-control.org](http://www.biological-arms-control.org).

### New Project

In November, the German Berghof Foundation for Conflict Research granted us financial support for a one-year project on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Since their establishment in 1986, the CBMs have been the only agreed information exchange mechanism in the framework of the BWC. As a consensus to resume negotiations on a verification protocol to the BWC is unlikely to emerge in the near future, a number of other options to increase confidence between countries in their compliance and to deter non-compliance must be explored during next year's Review Conference. One of these options will be an improved CBM regime. The project will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing CBM system and avenues to make them more effective in fostering compliance with the BWC. In close co-operation with political decision makers and experts from civil society, we will develop a catalogue of recommendations on how to improve the CBMs, in particular how to focus their contents on relevant information and how to increase participation. These recommendations will be published well before the Sixth BWC Review Conference in fall 2006.

### Ongoing Projects

The following research projects continue to be undertaken at the Hamburg Centre. More detailed information on these projects is available on our website [www.biological-arms-control.org](http://www.biological-arms-control.org):

- Controlling weapons by controlling science? The role of natural scientists in bioweapon programmes of states (funded by the Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung).
- Lessons learned from the UN inspections in Iraq (funded by the MacArthur Foundation).
- Export-import monitoring – Can global trade data be used for biological arms control? (funded by the MacArthur Foundation and the Joint Programme of the Compagnia di San Paolo, the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and the Volkswagen Stiftung).

## New Publications

### ■ Biological weapons control in a multipolar world

In this book ('Biowaffenkontrolle in einer multipolaren Welt. Zur Funktion von Vertrauen in internationalen Beziehungen'), reasons for the failure of the negotiations on a verification protocol for the BWC are analysed. Assuming that trust is an important precondition for co-operation in international relations, two reasons for the failure are identified: neither a common technical understanding of verification, nor a shared concept of a just distribution of costs and benefits was developed for the area of biological arms control. The negotiation process was hampered by a lack of trust in the technical verification possibilities and in the willingness of states to develop a just verification system. This situation has to be rectified if future efforts to add verification measures to the BWC are to be successful.

Hunger, Campus Verlag: Frankfurt/New York, 2005.

### ■ Biological weapons inspections in Iraq

As part of a book on the future of arms control, this article ('Biowaffeninspektionen im Irak') summarises the achievements, difficulties and lessons learned of the United Nations weapons inspections in Iraq from 1991 – 2003. The case is made for a follow-up organisation at the United Nations to maintain the inspector's unique expertise for future international verification efforts.

van Aken, in: Die Zukunft der Rüstungskontrolle (Neuneck, Mölling),  
Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft: Baden-Baden, 2005.

### ■ Biosecurity requires international supervision

In this short communication, we reported the results of a survey which indicated an adverse impact of US biosecurity legislation on German microbiology research. These findings underline the need for an international harmonisation of biosecurity and biosafety measures.

van Aken, Johannsen, Kollek, Nature 431:17, 2004.

### ■ Bioterrorism and microbiology research in Germany

This article ('Bioterrorismus-Angst und mikrobiologische Forschung in Deutschland') provides additional results from our microbiology survey in Germany.

van Aken, Johannsen, Kollek, Deutsches Ärzteblatt 101:A3014-A3016, 2004.

### ■ Policy options for biological arms control

This article ('Politische Handlungsoptionen zur Kontrolle biologischer Waffen') focuses on a European perspective on biological arms control and outlines a variety of policy options on the national, regional and international level to strengthen the norm against biological weapons.

Hunger, Meier, van Aken, in: Die Zukunft der Rüstungskontrolle (Neuneck, Mölling),  
Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft: Baden-Baden, 2005.

## Workshops and Seminars

### ■ **NGO Workshop on BWC Confidence Building Measures**

During this year's Meeting of BWC States Parties in Geneva, the Hamburg Centre organised a workshop on CBMs under the BWC. On 6 December 2005, 13 experts from academia and civil society came together to discuss possible options to strengthen the CBMs. The meeting focussed on how to improve participation of States Parties in the CBM process, and on how best to approach preparations for the 2006 BWC Review Conference.

### ■ **German Working Group on CBW Disarmament and Nonproliferation**

This year, the annual meeting of this working group was jointly organised by the Hamburg Centre, the Peace Research Information Unit Bonn, and Prof. Kathryn Nixdorff from the Technical University Darmstadt. On 1 November 2005, some 30 experts convened in Berlin to discuss policy options for the Sixth BWC Review Conference. Jonathan Tucker (Monterey Institute, USA) gave insights into 'The U.S. Approach to Bioweapons Control', Jan van Aken (Hamburg Centre) discussed a range of policy options from the European perspective, and Una Becker (Peace Research Institute, Frankfurt) presented a novel idea for an investigative mechanism under the UN Secretary General.

### ■ **30 Years Biological Weapons Convention – A Success Story?**

On the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BWC, the Hamburg Centre together with the Arms Control Association, the BioWeapons Prevention Project (BWPP) and the Hamburg Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy (IFSH) organised a seminar in Berlin on 23 March 2005. Speakers were Bernhard Brasack (German Foreign Office), Christopher Buck (US Embassy Berlin), Iris Hunger (Hamburg Centre) and Jean Pascal Zanders (BWPP). The participants from government, academia, industry and civil society assessed international efforts against bioweapons proliferation and discussed possibilities of and obstacles to transatlantic cooperation in the area of biological arms control.

## Teaching

Members of the Hamburg Centre are currently engaged in the following teaching activities:

- Course on 'Natural Sciences and Peace Research', in co-operation with the Hamburg Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy (IFSH);
- Seminar on 'Ethics for Engineers' at the Technical University Hamburg-Harburg;
- Lecture on 'Responsibility of Scientists' for first semester (bio-)chemistry students.

## Staff Activities

**Iris Hunger** joined the Hamburg Centre in January 2005. Besides working on her project "Controlling weapons by controlling science?" she managed the Centre during Jan van Aken's time at UNMOVIC. She presented a paper "For Biosecurity's Sake: More Transparency, not Less" in April at the International Bioterrorism Conference in Fürigen, Switzerland, and a paper on "Dual-use Knowledge, Technologies and Equipment" in June at a NATO Seminar in Sofia, Bulgaria. In September, she spoke about „ BW control between talking and acting: same problems, divergent interests, different strategies" at the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin. Iris was responsible for preparing and chairing this year's session of the German Working Group on CBW Disarmament and Nonproliferation. She went to London in November to do research work in the British National Archives. In December, Iris participated in the Geneva Pugwash Meeting, gave a presentation on CBMs during a lunchtime seminar organised by BWPP, and made a statement on behalf of the Hamburg Centre during the 2005 Meeting of the BWC States Parties.

**Nicolas Isla** joined the Hamburg Centre in August 2005, after finishing an internship at the WHO Program for Preparedness for Deliberate Epidemics. He is responsible for the CBM project where he analyses the existing CBMs with a view to develop policy options to improve this mechanism during the Sixth BWC Review Conference. Together with Iris Hunger, he conducted interviews on CBMs with state representatives and prepared the NGO workshop on the same topic in December in Geneva. Nicolas contributed to the export-import monitoring project and worked with Gunnar Jeremias on our new website.

**Gunnar Jeremias** started a two year project on export-import monitoring as a tool in biological arms control in August 2005. For case studies on existing export-import mechanisms he visited the Harvard-Sussex Program at the University of Sussex in Brighton, UK, in October and UNMOVIC and the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs in New York in November. He gave a presentation on 'The EU Activities in Non-Proliferation of WMD' at the Budapest Andr ssy University in October and discussed his project at the MIT Security Studies Program in November. Together with Nicolas Isla, Gunnar also worked on our new website.

**Jan van Aken** recently joined the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) in New York as a biological weapons inspector, but continued to contribute to the Hamburg Centre's work during an extended leave period from UNMOVIC. His research focused on an export-import monitoring feasibility study and on lessons learned from the inspection process in Iraq. In November, Jan gave a presentation on 'Preventing the misuse of biological knowledge' at the joint EMBL/EMBO 'Science and Society' Conference, and participated in the Geneva Pugwash Meeting in December.

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## The Hamburg Centre for Biological Arms Control

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The aim of the Hamburg Centre for Biological Arms Control is to contribute, through innovative research and outreach activities, to the universal prevention of biological weapon development, production and use. The development of new strategies, concepts and methods for verification and ensuring compliance is the core research area of the Hamburg Centre.



Our current staff members during the BWC meeting in December 2005 in Geneva.

From left to right:  
Dr. Jan van Aken (biologist),  
Dr. Iris Hunger (biochemist),  
Gunnar Jeremias, Dipl. pol.,  
M.P.S. (political scientist),  
Nicolas Isla M.Sc (microbiologist).

## Contact

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