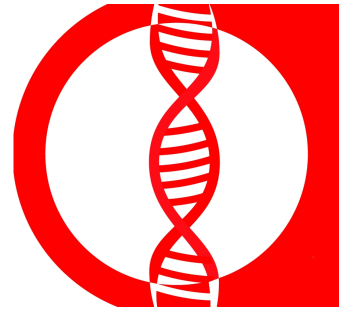


# Research Group for Biological Arms Control



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## News and Activities 5

February 2008

During the second half of 2007, the Research Group finalized its projects on the conceptual development of the trade monitoring system, on the lessons learned from UNSCOM/UNMOVIC, and on the role of scientists in bioweapons programmes. We secured funding for two new projects, one on economic, social and legal aspects of biodefence research and one to continue work on the trade monitoring system. In December 2007, the Research Group was elected to the Board of Directors of the BioWeapons Prevention Project (BWPP).

We are particularly proud about the development of our trade monitoring project. Monitoring the trade of biological dual use items requires a more detailed identification of such items in the classification system of the World Customs Organization (WCO) – the Harmonized System (HS). The Research Group, in September 2007, proposed a detailed list of items to the WCO which should be identified individually. This proposal was published as official WCO document NR0713E1a (+ Annex) of 5 November 2007 and put on the agenda of the 36<sup>th</sup> session of the WCO's HS Review Sub-Committee. This was in itself a significant event, because so far only states or international organisations had proposed changes to the HS. The Research Group was officially invited to introduce the proposal to the Sub-Committee and on 26 November 2007 Iris Hunger and Gunnar Jeremias formally presented the proposal at WCO headquarters in Brussels. During the discussion following the presentation, a number of states expressed their interest in further considering the proposal. The Sub-Committee decided to revisit the proposal at its next session in May 2008.

We would like to thank Prof. Erhard Geissler who has entrusted part of his library of documents, books and journals on bioweapons issues to the Research Group. These materials await sorting and cataloging and will then be available for consultation at our offices in Hamburg.

Detailed information on the work of the Research Group, copies of publications and regular activity updates can be found on our website: [www.biological-arms-control.org](http://www.biological-arms-control.org).

## New Projects

### Economic, social and legal aspects of biodefence research

The Research Group has received funding from the German Ministry of Education and Research for a three year project examining economic, social and legal aspect of biodefence research which is part of a cooperative venture developing detection systems for agroterrorism relevant agents. Iris Hunger will be the principal researcher.

## Trade monitoring workshop

The Research Group has received funding from the German Volkswagen Foundation to prepare and conduct a workshop "Amending the WCO's Harmonized System to Strengthen Nonproliferation Efforts for Bioweapons" to be held on 17 and 18 April 2008 in Brussels. State representatives and experts from international organisations, academia, industry and civil society will discuss the current state of export controls, experiences with past and present trade monitoring systems and our concept of a trade monitoring mechanism for biological dual use items including the necessary amendment of the WCO's Harmonized System. Gunnar Jeremias will be the principal researcher.

## Ongoing Projects

The following research projects continued to be undertaken at the Research Group. 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? (funded by the German Peace Research Foundation).
- ◆ Export/import monitoring (funded by the MacArthur Foundation).
- ◆ Lessons learned from the UN inspections in Iraq (funded by the MacArthur Foundation).
- ◆ The role of non-state actors in promoting nonproliferation and arms control against biological weapons (funded by the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond in Stockholm under the European Foreign and Security Policy Studies programme).
- ◆ Strengthening the Confidence Building Measure regime under the BWC (currently not funded).

## New Publications

### CBM Reader on Publicly Available CBMs 2006 and 2007

This short reader covers the years 2006 and 2007 and provides information on states' participation in the BWC's CBMs and summarizes the information contained in the publicly available CBMs. Following the decision at the Sixth Review Conference of the BWC in 2006 to limit access to the CBMs, we intend to publish this reader annually to highlight the importance of transparency in the area of biological dual use activities.

Research Group for Biological Arms Control. Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker Centre for Science and Peace Research. University of Hamburg, January 2008.

### Is the Availability of Genetic Information Dangerous?

The advance of biological technologies that allow for the construction of specific genetic sequences raises the possibility that someone, somewhere would use available genetic information to develop bioweapons and unleash a biological attack. The quandary facing scientists in the life sciences is similar to the issues that confronted scientists at the dawn of the nuclear age: Can potentially dangerous knowledge be made secret? Or should it be kept widely available? In a moderated online roundtable of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, four experts discuss the dangers and necessities of keeping genetic information public.

Hunger, Comments to the Roundtable "Is the availability of genetic information dangerous?", Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, <http://www.thebulletin.org/roundtable/smallpox-sequence-availability>.

### Neither Here Nor There. Disease Outbreak Data in the Confidence Building Measures under the Biological Weapons Convention and in Open Sources

This paper analyses the data on natural and unusual disease outbreaks declared by states under the Confidence Building Measures of the BWC and compares them to open source information. Disease data are often not declared and when they are, the information is often inaccurate and incomplete. Open source

information on disease outbreaks are hard to find and full of gaps. Recommendations are made for a redesigned and focussed declaration format on events of biosecurity concern.

Zmorzynska, Occasional Paper No. 4, Research Group for Biological Arms Control.  
Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker Centre for Science and Peace Research. University of Hamburg, December 2007.

### Possible Amendments of the Nomenclature

This WCO document contains the proposal by the Research Group to amend the HS nomenclature to more clearly identify biological dual use items. Such an amendment would not only make trade monitoring of such items possible, it would also help to improve implementation of national export controls and UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) and facilitate the work of customs authorities worldwide.

Research Group for Biological Arms Control, World Customs Organization. Harmonized System Review Sub-Committee. 36th Session, NR0713E1a (+Annex), 5 November 2007, Brussels.

### Some Thoughts on the Usefulness of Codes of Conduct

This discussion paper was submitted to the 27th Pugwash CBW Workshop "Moving Forward After the Sixth BWC Review Conference", held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 8 and 9 December 2007. It examines the different roles that scientists have played in bioweapon programmes and offers conclusions about the effectiveness of codes of conduct as a nonproliferation tool. The author argues that codes of conduct are a reactive, not a proactive, control measure; they can not prevent bioweapons programmes but they have their role to play in identifying, slowing and ending them.

Hunger, Discussion Paper, 27th Pugwash CBW Workshop "Moving Forward After the Sixth BWC Review Conference", Geneva, Switzerland, 8-9 December 2007.

## Workshops and Seminars

### German Working Group on CBW Disarmament and Nonproliferation

The Research Group was co-organizer of the annual meeting of this working group, which took place on 26 November 2007 in Berlin. Dr. Alexander Olbrich of the Federal Foreign Office gave a presentation on the state of affairs in biological arms control. Dr. Oliver Thränert of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, commented on by Mr. Peter Beerwerth of the Federal Foreign Office, spoke on developments in the Chemical Weapons Convention.

## Teaching

During the second half of 2007, members of the Research Group were engaged in the following teaching activities:

- ◆ Lecture "Contributions of the Natural Sciences to Peace Research", University of Hamburg;
- ◆ Seminar "Ethics for Biologists", University of Hamburg;
- ◆ Seminar "Ethics for Engineers", Technical University Hamburg-Harburg;
- ◆ Seminar "Natural Science and Peace Research", University of Hamburg;
- ◆ Orientation unit of the postgraduate programme "Master of Peace and Security Studies – M.P.S.", University of Hamburg.

## Staff Activities

Besides managing the Research Group in all its aspects, Iris Hunger continued work on her project "Controlling weapons by controlling science?". She spoke on "Transparency mechanisms under the BWC" at the conference "Transparency in Current and Emerging Approaches to Biosecurity", organized by the

Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation, on 19 October in Arlington (VA), and on the responsibilities of life scientists at the Bernhard-Nocht-Institute for Tropical Medicine on 30 October in Hamburg. Iris participated in a conference on biological threats, organized by the Federal College for Security Studies, on 13 November in Berlin. In December, in Geneva, she presented two papers at the 27th Pugwash CBW Workshop "Moving Forward After the Sixth BWC Review Conference" and delivered the Research Group's statement during the Meeting of States Parties to the BWC.

Nicolas Isla continued to work on his research project on the role of non-state actors in biological arms control. He was also involved in the preparation of the CBM reader and presented it at the 27th Pugwash CBW Workshop "Moving Forward After the Sixth BWC Review Conference" on 8 and 9 December in Geneva. Nicolas gave a presentation on "Challenges Facing the Biological Weapons Convention, National Implementation and Legal Enforcement" at the workshop "The Proliferation of WMD and International Humanitarian Law. Current Challenges and Effective Responses" on 16 November in San Remo, Italy. He continued to undertake administrative responsibilities of the Research Group such as design and maintenance of the website.

Gunnar Jeremias continued working on the trade monitoring project. Together with Iris Hunger he discussed the trade monitoring concept on 5 October with officials at the German Federal Ministry of Finance in Bonn and officially presented our proposal to amend the HS nomenclature to the HS Review Sub-Committee on 26 November in Brussels. On 19 October, he gave a presentation on "Trade Monitoring as a Transparency Enhancing Instrument in Biological Arms Control" at the conference "Transparency in Current and Emerging Approaches to Biosecurity", organized by the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation, in Arlington (VA).

Anna Zmorzynska finished her analysis of CBM Form B and authored our Occasional Paper No. 4 presenting the results of that analysis. She also prepared for a new project on biosecurity issues. Anna participated in the Biological Medical Defence Conference 2007 on 17 and 18 October in Munich, and in the conference "The Advancement of Science and the Dilemma of Dual Use: Why we can't Afford to Fail" on 9 and 10 November in Warsaw. In December, she went to Geneva to observe the Meeting of States Parties to the BWC and represented the Research Group at the BWPP Board Meeting on 12 December.

We welcomed two interns during the second half of 2007. Mirja Strbac from the University of Potsdam, Germany, looked into the state of affairs regarding nonlethal chemical and biological weapons during her six week stay with us in August and September. Jessica Weigand from the University of Hamburg, Germany, studied biographies and motivations of scientists in former bioweapons programmes during her six week internship in November and December.

## Research Group for Biological Arms Control

The aim of the Research Group 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 Group.

### Contact

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