



Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH)

Interdisciplinary Research Group on Arms Control & Disarmament (IFAR)

Research

Armament
Technologies
Security

The Interdisciplinary Research Group on Arms Control & Disarmament (IFAR) addresses the complex interaction between the dynamics of armament, potential weapons deployment, debates on strategy as well as the potential of arms control and disarmament as security policy instruments. The focus of its work is on the following lines of research:

1. arms control foundations, potential and forms, disarmament and non-proliferation after the end of the East-West conflict as well as the development of applied concepts of preventive arms control
2. monitoring the progressive dynamics of armament and arms control policy in Europe and worldwide with a focus on modern technologies
3. technical possibilities of existing and future (weapons) developments, in particular, in the area of missile defence and space weapons systems

Working Methods

Interdisciplinary
Basic Research
Expert Network

The increasing complexity of these issues is being examined by an interdisciplinary research group. Its work methods involve a combination of natural- and social-science techniques and expertise. Through intensive co-operation with other institutions of various disciplines basic research is conducted in the natural science/technical dimension of arms control. In addition, IFAR participates in a series of expert networks, which bring together expertise from the areas of research and praxis and concentrate research efforts.

Projects

Space
RMA
Arms Control

This working group has built up expertise over many years in the areas of co-operative arms control and arms technologies, developing various core capabilities. This expertise has allowed IFSH to make internationally recognized contributions in such areas as co-operative arms control, nuclear armament and disarmament, the assessment of technological arms processes, strategic stability, structural non-offensive capabilities, confidence building and European security. The group is currently working on the following projects:

- the future of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation,
- space weapons and missile defence and the potential for preventive arms control,
- missile defence und new technologies,
- developments in the sector on unmanned aerial vehicles/cruise missiles,
- implications and technical potential of airborne laser systems,
- Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA)/information warfare and their effects on arms control,
- the EU as a arms controller,
- weapons of mass destruction and terrorism
- "Collateral Damage – The Effects of Modern Warfare" (working title).

Transfer

Policy Advice
Conferences
Media
Publications

The group meets the high demands for its arms control policy expertise by offering practical policy advice to politicians and policy-makers (e.g. the German Federal Foreign Office, the Bundestag, the European Commission, NATO), scientists, economists and the media. Within this framework, expert opinions are issued regularly on security-policy topics to political bodies [Office of Technology Assessment at the German Bundestag (TAB)] and economic bodies [German Aerospace Centre (DLR)]. This also includes offering advice in the area of (natural) science for the “Open Skies” department of the German Verification Agency (ZVBw) in the area of “Infra-Red Sensors and the Open Skies Treaty”, conducting conferences and workshops, background talks with political decision-makers and the press as well as expert talks. For speakers of German, the group offers a web portal at www.armscontrol.de which was created within the framework of the project on “The Future of Arms Control”.

Teachings

IFAR promotes young academics in various ways. Alongside teaching courses at the University of Hamburg and in the “Master of Peace and Security Studies” programme, it offers the opportunity to complete a traineeship. In addition, IFAR participates regularly in the annual summer schools of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) at which young academics from all over the world take part, e.g. from the US, Russia, Europe, Pakistan, India and China.

Co-operation

The working group co-operates with a large number of national and international organizations. Just to name a few examples: the research group “Missile Defense” at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (HSFK), the International Working Group on Natural Sciences, Technology and Security (IANUS) at the Technical University Darmstadt, the Schleswig-Holstein Institute for Peace Research at the Christian-Albrechts-University Kiel (SHIP), the German Verification Agency (ZVBw), the Defense Studies Programme of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), GlobalSecurity and the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs.

Contact

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