

EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of *Disarmament Forum* assesses the current situation concerning missiles and investigates future prospects for control. Existing devices, such as the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOG), UN Security Council resolution 1540 and the Proliferation Security Initiative, are all attempts at ameliorating some aspects of missile-related problems, as are the various bilateral confidence-building measures already in operation. Much remains to be done, however, as cruise missiles are largely unregulated, HCOG implementation is progressing but leaves much to be desired, and research, development, deployment and international cooperation on active anti-ballistic missile defences continue apace. Following two United Nations panels of governmental experts on missiles in 2002 and 2004 (the latter of which failed to adopt a consensus report) and an expert study conveyed by the UN Secretary-General to the General Assembly in 2006, a third panel of governmental experts will be convened later this year.

The next issue of *Disarmament Forum* will focus on the recently established Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). A robust and effective PBC is in all of our interests. What can be done now, in its early stages, to support it and assist in its success? Contributors to this issue will consider how the PBC can be supported “beyond NY”, address maximizing the effectiveness of civil society engagement with the PBC, examine the challenges of peacebuilding coordination and identify possible challenges and opportunities in both the shorter and longer term.

One of the consequences of the global arms trade is the increasing reliance on arms brokers. Brokering is often a necessary supportive activity to facilitate the supply of arms required for legitimate national defence, law enforcement and civilian uses. However, the absence in most countries of effective laws and regulations to govern arms brokering has created a significant grey area in the international arms trade that is open to substantial abuse. A growing number of reports indicate that strict state control of arms brokering—including of small arms, light weapons and related materiel—is an essential component in efforts to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

On 28 November, UNIDIR, the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Small Arms Survey launched the joint study *Developing a Mechanism to Prevent Illicit Brokering in Small Arms and Light Weapons: Scope and Implications*. This launch was timed to coincide with the first week of meetings of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on brokering. The study examines existing instruments and mechanisms to regulate small arms brokering at the national and international levels. It identifies common elements and options for regulation, to enhance understanding of the issue and to clarify its most complex aspects. (See UNIDIR Focus, at the end of this issue, for more information about the publication.)

Preparations are under way for UNIDIR's annual conference on space security. This year we observe the fortieth anniversary of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the

Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (the Outer Space Treaty). Protection of the peaceful use of outer space becomes more urgent with each year that passes. The 2007 conference will build upon previous years' discussions on space security architecture. The edited proceedings of past conferences are available through our web site.

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