

Stockholm's Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Supports NATO with Mainly NATO Countries' Funding. Jan Oberg

"The independent source on global security"

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When NATO turned 75, the director of [SIPRI](#) – formally, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute – [Dan Smith](#) wrote [this diplomatic wishy-washy essay](#) about the alliance with program director [Barbara Kunz](#) who has a past in the US at the German Marshall Fund and in the German Federal Foreign Office's policy planning unit as an external expert.

The authors discuss the 'security dilemma,' deterrence, perceptions, and defence but do not address why NATO can be seen as co-responsible for the present, extremely serious security situation in Europe. Or, if you will, how it is a fiasco in terms of its self-perception as a defensive peace-making alliance.

They do not address [NATO's homepage's incredibly low intellectual level](#), which is filled with assertions, postulates, and accusations and is devoid of clear conceptualisations, theories, and analyses. They don't question NATO's constant pathetic image of Russia and China – oh, the Taiwan issue! – as enemies.

The authors say that *stability* is the goal of the international system; it isn't peace.

They do not problematize NATO's doctrine of Nuclear First Use or ask themselves what the alliance has achieved concretely.

They firmly believe that NATO does not represent a problem or is outdated. They conclude that it just needs to think a little differently, respect old concepts that worked well and "stay humble." (!)

The word peace doesn't appear in their text.

However, according to [§ 2 of its Statutes](#), SIPRI shall “conduct scientific research on questions of conflict and cooperation of importance for international peace and security, with the aim of contributing to an understanding of the conditions for peaceful solutions of interstate conflicts and for stable peace.”

Well, that's hardly what it does when it rubs itself with the Munich Security Conference or when its former Board Chairman, [Jan Eliasson, at length describes](#) how he thinks it was right for Sweden to join NATO.

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Today, SIPRI contributes nothing to the stated understanding of *peaceful solutions*. Instead, it promotes the traditional weapons-focused security concepts in general and an understanding of NATO country policies in particular.

SIPRI recently [stated](#) that

“Total global military expenditure reached \$2443 billion in 2023, an increase of 6.8 per cent in real terms from 2022...In 2023 the 31 NATO members accounted for \$1341 billion, equal to 55 per cent of the world's military expenditure. Military spending by the USA rose by 2.3 per cent to reach \$916 billion in 2023, representing 68 per cent of total NATO military spending.”

But SIPRI's leaders do not see that as a problem. Smith and Kunz don't ask why NATO is such a huge overspender relative to the rest of the world.

And here, you find [the institute's clearly pro-NATO markings of the alliance's 75th anniversary](#), where you may also take note of Jan Egeland's absurd argument that alliance membership does not hinder any member from promoting causes it believes are important. Did he ever hear about, say, disarmament, nuclear abolition or confidence building with Russia?

You get the gist. The above-mentioned essay and the SIPRI's materials presented to mark NATO's 75th anniversary could hardly be more toothless. They represent neither peace nor free research. They smack of commissioned work within an intellectual “groupthink” thriving inside an echo chamber of political correctness.

The world receives SIPRI's publications as statistically authoritative, and that is not wrong, many are – such as those on military expenditures and arms trade. However, this type of *bean-counting* isn't what SIPRI was originally established to do. And that explains why SIPRI so seldom manages to create debate about the existentially important issues it works with.

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SIPRI now (on top of all its pages) calls itself “*The independent resource on global security*”—note that SIPRI decades ago was proud of associating itself with the word “peace;” then it became an independent resource on security *and peace*, and now “peace” has been dropped.

Well, that is at least indicative of some honesty.

Eight years ago, in a scathing critique, [I argued](#) that SIPRI was no longer a peace research institute and recommended a name change to *Stockholm International Military Security Institute, SIMSI*. Everything I wrote back then is worse now.

As mentioned, SIPRI pathetically prides itself on being an independent source of security. The word “independent,” however, is clearly dishonest.

If you look at [SIPRI's funding](#), virtually 100% comes from NATO members and partners.

The largest is Sweden and various institutions, including Uppsala University, but you also notice the governments and various organisations in the EU, Germany, Holland, the UK, USAID, Open Societies Foundation, Japan, and Taiwan.

Ask yourself why all these NATO-related countries support SIPRI. What is in it for them? What would the price for SIPRI to pay if the institute published a series of critical analyses of the basic propensity of our time to use military means no matter what the problem is? If it criticised the world's larger military consumers and war-fighting countries – that is, NATO? And if it devised imminently possible alternatives to the arms races, sabre-rattling, militarism and, say, NATO's extremely ill-conceived, tension-increasing expansion against all promises given to Gorbachev and in defiance of all – also Western – experts warnings that that expansion would end us all in a war? And what if it published true conflict-resolution ideas and principles that show, in one conflict after the other, how things could be done differently?

Unthinkable, of course. SIPRI is anything but independent. Its funding is extremely biased.

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Over time, SIPRI has become as intellectually boring and politically mainstream as NATO itself – and as quite a few other peace research institutes. [The discourse on peace](#) – in research, politics and media – has *been* disappeared in the maelstrom of contemporary Western militarism.

In such a situation, SIPRI could have stood up like a beacon for international peace through true peace research. Its leadership – and the backing Swedish government – chose not to and must, therefore, be deemed increasingly irrelevant. There are more than enough traditional security research institutes around the world.

If she knew where SIPRI stands today, the founding mother of SIPRI, [Alva Myrdal](#), would likely rotate in her grave because she was a world-renowned woman of peace and vision, a disarmament ambassador, a leader of the international disarmament movement, a social democrat and a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Her vision has been destroyed by the very thinking and forces she devoted her life to reducing – which is also indicative of what has happened to the social democracy that, once upon a time, was oriented towards peace.

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