

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

**THE EU NON-PROLIFERATION AND
DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE**

BRUSSELS

3-4 FEBRUARY 2012

**SECOND PLENARY SESSION
NON-PROLIFERATION AND SECURITY
IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

SATURDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2012

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Coordinator, Academic Peace Orchestra Middle East

Camille Grand

Thank you very much for that excellent presentation that really puts us right into the debate. I take the point about openness as extremely important. Let me now turn to Bernd Kubbig, Project Director at PRIF, and also, as I discovered, coordinator of the Academic Peace Orchestra Middle East.

Bernd Kubbig

Thank you, Camille, and thank you for inviting me to this important meeting. It is a pleasure to be here. I would like to focus on missiles as something in which all the major problems are reflected in terms of proliferation in the region. I have three major points: to present to you: missiles as 1) part of the overall problem and 2) part of a solution – according to the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin, *‘Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst das Rettende auch’* – ‘where the danger is growing, the measures and the prospects of salvation are coming through; and 3) what the EU can do.

The first point is the missile-proliferation problem. Let me present it to you in terms of reduced complexity and in terms of a square. You have the pole of the US, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Iran; hopefully in the middle, at some point again, you have a productive Egyptian role, like in May 2010. In terms of vertical proliferation in the missile/missile defence area, the US is by far the largest proliferator on earth, and the largest recipient of missiles and missile defences is the region, including, among others, His Highness’s country, the UAE and Kuwait – double digits of billions of dollars. It is good for the US economy but I doubt that it is good for the problem of proliferation in the region.

Nevertheless, I would say, concerning your country, Your Highness, that the good news is that the deliveries of missiles and missile defence may reduce the incentives to go nuclear in your country. For me, that is the good news, because I think, for the time being, in the next 10-15 years, you will be a net importer of security. You are not capable of being a producer of your own security, so I think that you will be one of the countries that will stay under the wings of the American eagle.

Following this square of four countries, we have Israel and Iran, and this is where we come to vertical proliferation, which means that both countries are beefing up or improving their missile capabilities in terms of their quality, accuracy and numbers. Of course, this has to do with threat perceptions and with being part of an overall coalition within alliances and the conflicts that exist in the region. Nevertheless, in both countries, I see the dark forces of the military-industrial complex at work. You cannot explain why Israel needs an intercontinental ballistic missile that travels 4,500-6,000km. Where is the enemy?

The same holds true, to a large extent, for Iran and its missile programme.

Vertical and horizontal proliferation, then, are the major aspects of the region. I have left out the most imminent problem of proliferation at the sub-state level, but we can deal with this in the question and answer session.

My second point is around missiles and their potential for solving problems of proliferation in the region.

I say this not by focusing on missiles themselves but on missiles as part of the envisaged Middle East conference on WMD and their means of delivery. Missiles are part of the agenda envisaged by the international community for this conference this year. I see the potential for solving longstanding problems of proliferation – closely connected to armament and disarmament in the region – in the following way: in its wisdom, the international community has broadened its mandate.

It is not just the fixation on the nuclear issue; it is biological and chemical weapons and delivery vehicles.

This means that there is potential at the table for trade-offs. This is the key to success for such an agenda. It is the key for compromise and it goes down into the core mentality of the entire region, with its market mentality. This means that there is no room for maximalist solutions, but there are golden opportunities – which are what this conference stands for – for compromise as the basis for creating win-win situations.

Secondly, in its wisdom, the international community has the phrasing in the mandate ‘freely arrived at’, which I interpret as incentives – or golden opportunities – for all countries in the region to come together, talk and negotiate. Again, they may not necessarily get all that they need or want, but probably 80%. You give a little and take a little. I think this is the major point.

Thirdly, looking back to the square, the main problem within it is that all the problem countries hardly talk to each other. A forum like the Middle East conference is, again, a golden opportunity to overcome the lack of direct communication. Your Royal Highness, in one of your fantastic articles, you said that even your country, when it comes to relations with Israel, cannot talk directly. I think that this conference, if it happens, is an opportunity for all countries, behind the scenes and at various levels, to talk to each other. If I had one wish, it would be that the President of Iran, Mr Obama – hopefully re-elected and strong in that area – and Mr Netanyahu at some point negotiate themselves, behind the curtain, on the issues that all bother us.

My final point is: what can the Europeans do? I think they can do a lot. I will not talk about the current strategy towards Iran, because I think it is wrong, it is counterproductive, and it needs to be reversed. What the Europeans could do in the area of missiles and beyond is to start concrete outreach activities towards new target groups in the region, such as young diplomats and journalists, to educate them in the norms that we discuss here and which we think are valuable.

Secondly, in terms of small causes, a big impact over time in the mid-to-long term would be to focus on the institutionalisation of arms control/mediation concepts for the Middle East entrenched in specific regional security centres as a way of empowering our colleagues there to take their own fate into their hands.

Summing up, I would say that, at this point, we have talked about weapons and missiles, which are a problem, as the testing of the Iranian missile in December has shown. Right now, all we can do is to favour measures to de-escalate the current crisis situation, and missiles could be part of it.

Let me conclude by citing an example that we had in our multilateral study group the other day between an Iranian and an Israeli colleague. Both fear the missiles of the other country, and they came up with this solution: ‘Why not cap the range of your missiles so that they cannot reach our country, and we cap the range of our missiles so that they cannot reach your country?’ I think this could be a confidence-building measure within a needed strategy to de-escalate the current situation within the broader context of the WMD/delivery-vehicle-free zone as a golden opportunity for bringing a new thinking around security in the region that is no longer based on unilateralism but which could provide an opportunity for cooperative, small, selected measures to increase security and to reduce the security dilemma. Thank you so much.

Camille Grand

Bernd, thank you for placing emphasis on the issue of missiles, which are, indeed, very central in this process and in the region. Very often, the missile race is the tip of the iceberg in WMD programmes,

so a lot of attention should be paid to this. Let me now turn to the next speaker, Sameh Aboul-Enein, who is the Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister of Egypt as well as Professor of Disarmament and Security Studies at AUC. Of course, Egypt plays a central role in this debate and we are very much looking forward to your remarks.