

Building New Opportunities for the Next Generation: Interview with Ettore Greco



Ettore Greco is the Executive Vice President and the Head of the Multilateralism and Global Governance programme at IAI. He was IAI's Director from 2008 to 2017, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution from January 2006 to July 2007. He taught European integration at the Universities of Parma and Bologna, and was a correspondent for the Economist Intelligence Unit. From 2000 to 2006 he was editor of *The International Spectator*. He is the author of a number of publications on the EU's institutions and foreign and security policy, transatlantic relations and the Balkans.

IAI is known internationally for its security studies, which include a specific line of research dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation. What are the main topics of its research in the field?

Since its foundation in 1965, the institute has conducted several projects on nuclear arms control and disarmament mostly focused on the strategic balance in Europe. Our research on nuclear non-proliferation has centred on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review process, but we have also published several studies on the cases of Iran and North Korea. Chemical disarmament has been another important topic of [our research](#) since the establishment of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We have also paid growing attention to the new security threats in the cyber and outer space domains.

IAI joined [the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament \(EUNPD\) Consortium](#) in 2018. What is IAI's specific role in this context?

In addition to publishing this monthly newsletter, we have organised the last three editions of the annual [EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Conference](#), one of the main EU-sponsored public events devoted to arms control. With the Consortium's support we have done our best to enrich the conference's format, in particular, by involving an increasingly higher number of young scholars. In the past two years we also held a complementary [Next-Generation Workshop](#), which enjoyed considerable success.

Are there more recent activities worth mentioning?

A new initiative, which is part of our wider effort to reach out to young people, is the [Young Women and Next Generation Initiative](#) in Non-proliferation and Disarmament. This initiative, which is implemented within the framework of the EUNPD Consortium, was launched by IAI and [the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation \(VCDNP\)](#) at the beginning of

this year. The aim is to address [ongoing age and gender imbalances among experts and practitioners in the non-proliferation and disarmament realm](#) by helping students and young professionals understand how to pursue a career in these fields. Transatlantic dialogue also remains central to our activities. In February, we held an international conference on [NATO's role in arms control](#). We will soon publish a volume on that subject. At the same time, we feel committed to stimulating the debate on the new frontiers of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament including, in particular, the impact of technological transformation. The [latest issue](#) of our English-language journal *The International Spectator* examines, from different perspectives, the new arms control challenges. In conducting such activities, we have always placed special emphasis on the need for the EU to acquire greater ["strategic autonomy"](#) in arms control - as much as in other policy areas).

Transatlantic cooperation remains key to the advancement of the arms control agenda. What prospects do you see to re-launch such cooperation?

The multilateralist approach adopted by the Biden administration offers many new opportunities for reviving the transatlantic cooperation. The US and the EU have a common interest in preserving non-proliferation and disarmament regimes such as those based on the NPT and the CWC. The decision to extend the New Start may prove a game changer and become a catalyst for new agreements. However, persistent tensions with Russia and China will remain a major stumbling block to progress in nuclear disarmament. Also, the prospect of the US re-joining the nuclear deal with Iran, to which the EU attaches great importance, is complicated by enduring conflictual dynamics in the Middle East. The climate in transatlantic relations has changed but a note of caution is warranted.

BREAKING THE IMPASSE OVER THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

US President Joe Biden's stated intention to consult with European allies before beginning efforts to revive the Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), gives EU members a way to enhance European security.

Europeans lauded the 2015 deal, which epitomised values of non-proliferation, multilateral diplomacy, transatlantic partnership, and an EU leadership role. Europeans were aghast when Biden's predecessor withdrew from the deal in 2018 and then when Iran steadily withdrew from its own obligations.

Biden has pledged to go back to the deal if Iran returns to full compliance. Iran says it will do so if the US first lifts sanctions. Meanwhile, Tehran is increasing enrichment capacity, producing uranium metal and has indicated it will stop implementation of the safeguards Additional Protocol. Iran's escalating JCPOA non-compliance further complicates Biden's policy choice, however, he cannot be seen to buckle under to pressure.

The EU can help break the 'who goes first' conundrum by promoting the tried-and-true diplomatic gambit of simultaneity. The EU can facilitate the steps necessary for mutual compliance by a set date, say three months in the future. To get the process going, Western partners can take the unilateral step of removing the block on Iran's request for a \$5 billion IMF loan. It is important to move quickly before Iranian elections in June make President Hassan Rouhani a lame duck.

Europeans should dissuade Biden from tightly coupling the nuclear issue with concerns about Iran's regional activity and missiles. Arab Gulf States and Israel have good reason to seek inclusion in negotiations over a broader agreement. But that should come second, after the JCPOA is restored. To preserve European security and multilateralism, the JCPOA needs to be looked at in the context of repairing transatlantic relations and addressing the nuclear issue exclusively.

Jamelee Bal, Mark Fitzpatrick

International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)/ EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium



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Latest Publications

The Plan to Save the Iran Deal Needs Private Sector Buy-In, Darya Dolzikova, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), 2021

Deterrence in the age of artificial intelligence & autonomy: a paradigm shift in nuclear deterrence theory and practice? James Johnson, Dublin City University, 2021

Supporting Small Arms and Light Weapons Controls through Development Assistance: The Case of sub-Saharan Africa, Giovanna Maletta, Lucile Robin, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 2021

A renaissance of nuclear disarmament, or merely a new start? Sascha Hach, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF/ HSFK), 2021

Remembering Mike Elleman



The EUNPD Consortium sadly reports the loss of our esteemed colleague and renowned missile expert Michael Elleman, who passed away on February 20th, 2021.

A memorial event is expected to be held in Washington, DC, when circumstances allow.

Mark Fitzpatrick, long-time colleague and friend, pays tribute to Mike's life and work here:

[Michael Elleman 1958-2021](#)

NETWORK NEWS

The EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Papers Series

As part of its mandate, defined in Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/299 of 26 February 2018, the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium is publishing a new series of Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Policy Papers. One of the latest papers is authored by Laura Considine (Ireland) is a Lecturer in International Relations at the School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds.

The Importance of Narrative in Nuclear Policymaking: A Study of The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
Summary:

This paper examines the role and importance of dominant narratives on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament policymaking, with a focus on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). By analysing a range of policy, commentary and academic texts from 1996 to 2020, the paper identifies three core tropes of NPT discourse: the NPT as a 'cornerstone', the NPT as a 'grand bargain' and the NPT as a continuous crisis. It claims these tropes support a dominant narrative of the NPT that justifies continually lowered expectations, that is status quo-oriented and that is unfavourable to initiatives based on a vision of the future. The paper highlights the importance of the generally uncontested language that forms the background of NPT political disputes and argues this language plays an important role in shaping what is understood as possible and legitimate in non-proliferation and disarmament policymaking. It examines the European Union as an actor in NPT discourse, highlighting its role in maintaining the dominant narrative through key tropes. It recommends paying further attention to the political power of the taken-for-granted language that forms the background of NPT political contests.

Read the full paper [here](#)
Previous papers can be found [here](#)

CONSORTIUM NEWS

E-Learning Course on Non-proliferation, Disarmament and EU Policies

The EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium, through the EU Council Decision CD 2014/129/CFSP of 10 March 2014, launched The EU Non-proliferation and Disarmament eLearning Course.

The Course is currently composed of 15 learning units, covering arms control theory, WMD and conventional weapons, humanitarian arms control and emerging technologies. It also addresses all relevant aspects of the EU non-proliferation and disarmament agenda, and aims to provide a comprehensive knowledge resource for practitioners and scholars interested in arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament.

Free of charge and offering an optional certificate section, the Course is an open educational resource for all interested users world-wide. Currently, five new learning units are under development, which will be published over the course of the year. Stay tuned!

More info: [The EU Non-proliferation and Disarmament eLearning Course](#)