

Interview with Mark Fitzpatrick



Mark Fitzpatrick is Executive Director of IISS-Americas, responsible for representing the institute in the Western Hemisphere. He also heads the IISS Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Policy Programme. Mark joined the IISS as director of the Non-Proliferation Programme in 2005. He served as US Foreign Service Officer from 1979-2005, with postings in Seoul, Tokyo, Wellington, Vienna and Washington, including as acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Non-proliferation

How do you assess the evolution of the nonproliferation, disarmament, and arms control landscape in recent years? What do you think are the main future challenges?

Surveying the landscape and horizon, many goals seem to be receding. Arms control between the superpowers is in a coma, with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty under mortal threat. The post-Cold War drawdown in nuclear arsenals has slowed to a snail's pace. Chemical-weapons use is becoming normalized, as witnessed in Syria, at the Kuala Lumpur airport and in Salisbury. And the Middle East is no closer to a WMD-free zone. Meanwhile, Washington has abdicated its non-proliferation leadership and undermined the Iran nuclear deal, which was the biggest non-proliferation success story of the past decade and the EU's crowning foreign policy achievement. Yet there is reason for hope and renewed determination in light of Iran's own continued adherence to the accord, recent efforts to reduce the North Korean threat, implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the development of potent counter-proliferation tools in the realms of intelligence, finance and open-source exploitation.

What should the EU do to acquire a more effective role in countering the proliferation of WMDs and SALWs and promoting worldwide disarmament?

Washington's retreat from the field puts a heavier responsibility on the European Union to pick up the slack. The EU is ill-placed to lead in areas where member states disagree among themselves, such as over nuclear disarmament. This still leaves a broad agenda, however, including under-appreciated endeavors to make space non-militarized, missile development transparent and chemical-weapons use attributed. Among its advantages, the EU brings to such efforts a deep reservoir of substantive knowledge, capacity-building assistance programs and finesse in multilateral diplomacy. Partnership with non-governmental experts through the EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Network is another plus. Most importantly, in my view, the EU should do what it can to preserve the non-proliferation benefits of the Iran nuclear accord until the US comes back to its senses.

We are witnessing a deepening rift between the USA and the EU on topics related to disarmament

and nonproliferation, with Iran being the primary example. Do you envision this to be a temporary situation? Do you think it is still possible to build a joint transatlantic agenda on arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament?

In most disputes, blame is not uniquely born by one party. In the case of issues of concern to this newsletter's readership, however, Washington nearly alone is responsible for the lamentable rift. America firsters revel in Europe-bashing. As an American representing a London-based research institute, I urge Europeans not to give up hope. My country is at a dangerous nadir in a cyclical pattern. When the US eventually rights itself, transatlantic policies will re-sync. Until then, I hope the EU can preserve recent non-proliferation gains and keep other problems from overflowing. Meanwhile, even amidst the policy turmoil in Washington, there are positives to build upon, such as President Donald Trump's inclination for summitry with adversaries.

You have been one of the most prominent figures in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium since its establishment in 2010. The EU Council has recently decided to expand its mandate and membership. In your view, what main objectives should the Consortium pursue in the coming years?

When four think tanks started the Consortium in 2010, we aimed to create a sense of community among disparate researchers, to promote public-private problem solving and to build global support for the EU's non-proliferation agenda. As the last of the Consortium founders (with Camille Grand from the FRS, Harald Mueller from PRIF, Ian Anthony from SIPRI, and Annalisa Giannella from the EU), I feel some pride in our successes, small though they may have been. As I retire from full-time endeavors this December, I look forward to watching the newly expanded Consortium and Network address problems with new determination. Buttressing the EU as the pre-eminent leader in non-proliferation and disarmament, they should seek to hold states to their commitments under treaties governing arms trade, chemical and biological weapons, and nuclear technologies; to extend the limits of the Iran deal to also address missile transfers and range limits; and to build global consensus on practical steps to reduce dangers from the weapons systems in our remit. In our field, as in others, we can employ the campers' motto to 'leave the campsite better than we found it'.

Breaking the Stalemate over North Korea

South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un made remarkable progress towards inter-Korean reconciliation during the joint summit on September 18 in Pyongyang by declaring their intention to undertake several bilateral cooperation initiatives. Kim also announced a number of "practical denuclearization steps". These include a promise to permanently close a missile engine test site and a satellite launch facility in Tongchang-ri, and to shutter a nuclear material production site in Yongbyon in exchange for a number of unspecified concessions by the US. Another promising development was Kim Jong-un's avowed commitment to allow international inspectors to oversee the termination of activities at the twin sites in Tongchang-ri.

It remains to be seen if these moves, which are easily reversible and fairly limited in scope, will be enough to break the diplomatic stalemate that has ensued since the landmark Singapore summit between Kim Jong-un and the US President Donald Trump on June 12.

EU High Representative Federica Mogherini welcomed the outcome of the inter-Korean summit, describing the talks as an encouraging sign that "diplomacy is the way forward". Over the past months, HR Mogherini has repeatedly expressed the EU's "full support" for South Korea's efforts to promote inter-Korean dialogue. At the UN General Assembly, she further underlined the EU's readiness to contribute to these efforts.

With this goal in mind, diplomatic progress on the Korean peninsula should proceed in stages. A first give-and-take package could include a North Korean declaration disclosing its nuclear assets and activities coupled with a credible commitment for international oversight and verification of the contents of such declaration. In exchange, the US should agree on the end-of-war declaration sought by both Pyongyang and Seoul and endorse a first, limited, easing of sanctions.

Such step-by-step approach should develop in parallel with further progress on inter-Korean reconciliation. It is essential that the US and South Korea coordinate their diplomatic moves to maximize their leverage and ability to influence North Korea's behavior. The EU has explicitly noted its interest to preserve the multilateral framework of the negotiations, and can acquire an increasingly prominent role in the diplomatic process, including in the efforts to establish credible oversight and verification mechanisms.

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EU News

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Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
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Network Call:

57th ISODARCO Course “The Past and Future of Arms Control, Non-proliferation and Disarmament”

Applications are now open for the 57th
ISODARCO Course: “The Past and Future
of Arms Control, Non-proliferation and
Disarmament”. The course will be held in
Andalo (Trento), Italy, 6 - 13 January 2019

Registration fee: EUR 500.00
Reduced fee: EUR 300.00

Deadlines:

- *Wednesday, October 10th, 2018* for
applicants requiring an Italian visa
- *Wednesday, November 7th, 2018* for
applicants who *do not* require an Italian
visa

Participants wishing to submit a paper for
consideration should enclose a short
abstract of their proposed contribution in
their application.

For further information please contact
Carlo Schaerf or visit www.isodarco.it

EU INSTITUTIONAL NEWS

Autonomous weapons must remain under human control, Mogherini says at European Parliament

On 11 September 2018, in an address to the European Parliament, EU High Representative Federica Mogherini laid out the four pillars of the EU’s position on lethal autonomous weapon systems:

1) the control of such systems should remain under the responsibility of states and humans; 2) the appropriate framework to regulate the use of these weapons remains the UN [Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons \(CCW\)](#); 3) all weapons systems, including autonomous weapons, are subjected to international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law; 4) given the dual-use character of emerging technologies, policy measures should not hamper civilian research in these domains.

HR/VP Mogherini also stressed the necessity for EU-wide agreement on common principles regarding the military use of artificial intelligence and expressed her intention to table this issue with Defence Ministers in a future Council meeting. The four pillars were then integrated in a [European Resolution \(2018/2752\(RSP\)\)](#), adopted on 12 September 2018.

Other recent initiatives have been undertaken towards regulating autonomous weapons. In 2016, the Fifth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW established a [Group of Governmental Experts \(GGE\) on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems \(LAWS\)](#). Early this month, the GGE agreed on a first set of “[Possible Guiding Principles](#)” to control the use of such weapons. In her speech to the Parliament, HR/VP Mogherini also underlined her decision to establish of a “[Global Tech Panel](#)” of leaders from the tech industry, other economic sectors, and civil society. The goal of the panel is to explore ways “to harness the opportunities of the digital era while also addressing the rising threats”.

[Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the plenary session of the European Parliament on Autonomous Weapons Systems](#)

NETWORK NEWS

The EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium members meet for Seventh Consultative Meeting

The Seventh Consultative Meeting of the EUNPDC was held in Brussels (Borschette Center) on 4-5 September 2018. Each year, the EUNPDC Consultative Meeting offers a unique opportunity for EU Member States, EU officials and leading European experts to discuss the most salient topics in the non-proliferation and disarmament agenda during one and a half day meeting. The purpose is to offer a closed and intimate framework for a in depth and free-flowing dialogue among European arms control practitioners.

This year, the consultative meeting tackled the most pressing challenges in the Middle East (the US withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018) and in North East Asia (the DPRK’s “denuclearization” process after the June 2018 Singapore Summit). Further topics included the prospect of nuclear disarmament in a deteriorating strategic environment, the UN Secretary general’s disarmament agenda, the reinforcement of the chemical weapons prohibition regime after the 2017 crises and the EU strategy against illicit small arms and light weapons.

On several occasions in the past the non-proliferation and disarmament regime was perceived as undergoing a major crisis. However, present trends appear particularly challenging. A number of developments have contributed to undermining the normative order - North Korea’s withdrawal from the NPT in 2003, US and Russia’s strategic dialogue stalemate since 2014, chemical weapons use in the Syrian conflict since 2013, etc - and existing arms control and non-proliferation agreements are getting dangerously close to unravelling. In such a context, it was widely acknowledged by the hundred participants at the meeting that the EU has a special responsibility to uphold existing regimes in a coherent, concerted and effective way, pursuant to the principle of “effective multilateralism” which has been the cornerstone of the European Strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction since 2003.

Benjamin Hautecouverture, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS) /
EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium