The Third Step for Coping with Military Asymmetries in the Middle East
A Framework for Missile-related Confidence- and Security-building Measures

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In May 2010, the 189 members of the Review Conference to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) endorsed holding a Middle East Conference (MEC) in 2012 whose aim would be to create a zone in the Middle East “free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction” (WMD). Delivery systems – or vehicles (DV) – were explicitly included in the Mandate in paragraph 7(d) which refers to the “full implementation” of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. While “all other” WMD comprise biological and chemical weapons, delivery systems usually consist of ballistic and cruise missiles, of aircraft as well as of unmanned aerial vehicles. Missile defense systems could also be included, since they are the ‘technological twins’ of ballistic missiles.1

This POLICY BRIEF emphasizes the importance of DVs and hence missiles, and it makes the case: first, for the category of delivery vehicles as having a constructive role to play in the Helsinki Conference; second, it argues that discussions about missiles and related CSBMs allow for a number of conceptual, political, and procedural advantages. This POLICY BRIEF also lays the conceptual ground for confidence building and offers an overview of issues to come. It also addresses the problem of adequate verification as an indispensable element of any arms control/reduction strategy towards a WMD/DVs Free Zone in the Middle East.

The Case for Missiles

If it is carried out in a productive atmosphere among the negotiators, the discussion of missiles can contribute to the success of the still envisaged Helsinki gathering, because they...

- ... are part and parcel of the Mandate for the Helsinki Conference; in line with that Mandate, I suggest including discussions of missiles with a range of 70 km or more, because they can in principle carry WMD warheads, and they can be sufficiently/adequately verified.2 Establishing such ‘red lines’ would permit the negotiators to leave conventional arsenals of lower ranges (especially rockets and artillery shells) outside the scope of the Helsinki Conference, increasing the chances of agreement and reducing complexities.3
- ... are a suitable starting point for serious and credible arms control discussions and they may, in the first place in politically explosive relationships, be an immediate de-escalatory tool to manage and decrease deep-rooted mistrust. Because discussions of missiles are less politically

Missiles and the Mandate of the Helsinki Conference on a WMD/DVs Free Zone

International organizations were explicitly asked “to prepare background documentation” for the MEC “regarding modalities for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles” (paragraph 7(d) of the Mandate). We as a classical Track-II initiative feel encouraged to understand this demand as our effort of conceptualizing confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) properly as one element of a gradual reduction path towards the ambitious objective of a sustainable WMD/DVs Free Zone. Regional asymmetries across all these categories of weapons and their means of transportation must be addressed. These imbalances are both a challenge and an opportunity for the Track II analysis represented by this POLICY BRIEF as well for the actual conduct of the MEC.

This POLICY BRIEF makes the case that missile-related confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) are vital steps on way to a WMD/DVs Free Zone which will be discussed at the Helsinki Conference. Both categories of CSBMs – modest ones such as hot lines, or far-reaching ones, e.g. the de-targeting and de-alerting of missiles, are one element of an integrated and long-term approach that also includes arms control, reductions, and disarmament. However, both the missiles and the trust-building initiatives need to be seen within the predominant conflict formations in the Middle East. CSBMs are therefore analyzed in terms of the relationships between and among crucial states. The objective is twofold: first, to find out to what extent missile-related measures can address the core challenges identified in those relationships; and, second, whether and to what extent the constructive potential of CSBMs can tackle the five main arms control/reduction- and Helsinki-related challenges: managing and reducing deep-rooted mistrust; helping to start an arms control dialogue; offering positive spill-over effects in other areas, i.e. nuclear, biological, and chemical warheads; providing opportunities for norm building; and increasing opportunities in negotiations for trade-offs and bargaining.

This POLICY BRIEF is based on the discussions of two ACADEMIC PEACE ORCHESTRA working groups held in Vienna from September 8-10, 2012, and in Malta from January 23-25, 2013, with participants coming from Austria, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, United States, and the United Arab Emirates.
loaded than especially talks about nuclear weapons, this can help initiate dialogue at the MEC and serve as trial balloons for exploring further negotiating options. Missiles as a subject of the Helsinki Agenda can also aid talks on other means of delivery such as aircraft, making them part of the overall asymmetrical equation.

• ... provide opportunities for initial arms building in a virtually arms-free zone. The Hague Code of Conduct Against the Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles (HCOC) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) offer a context for Middle Eastern states to strengthen their rules, regulations, and norms – presumably informally without having to join those regimes which have to be made more credible in the first place (for instance, by taking the criticism of the non-members in the Middle East seriously who ask for e.g. more cooperation in the civilian space sector).

• ... are indispensably linked to WMD – discussing missiles in Helsinki can have a spill-over effect into more sensitive areas, especially nuclear warheads. Those types of missiles, which are in principle designed to carry nuclear, biological, and chemical warheads, can serve as a bridge to address all three kinds of WMD. Without them the conventional, nuclear, biological, and chemical warheads are to a considerable extent sitting ducks.

To be sure, the success of having the Bashar al-Assad regime join the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the associated ongoing dismantlement of the chemical stockpiles in Syria after the catastrophic use of chemical weapons on August 21, 2013 suggest: missiles may become obsolete once the warheads are destroyed. The enforced Syrian membership in the CWC may even trigger new and positive dynamics. They might lead Israel to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention, which it signed in 1993. But tackling the issue of Israel’s nuclear capabilities will be rocky, cumbersome and it will require trust-building efforts regarding all three categories of weapons of mass destruction carried by DVs such as ballistic missiles. Therefore, the rationale presented here for a prominent role for delivery vehicles in this long process is far from obsolete.

• ... they increase opportunities for trade-offs and bargaining: the Helsinki Agenda with a focus broader than the nuclear issue makes trade-offs more likely and provides additional room for bargaining and compromise, based on the principle of ‘give a little, take a little’. At the same time, including all three categories of WMD and of DVs reduces the danger of singling out countries with actual (Israel) or possibly emerging (near) nuclear weapon capabilities (Iran). The MEC Mandate states that all results will be “freely arrived at” – all participants at the Helsinki Conference are free in the decisions they take according to their interests. This stipulation provides an additional incentive for all Middle Eastern states to come to Helsinki.

While the foregoing suggests that missiles can become part of the solution, they are, at least initially, part of the problem: missiles have been used in nearly all Middle East wars. They are also an element of an ongoing and increasingly intense arms race. Since missiles cannot be called back once they are launched, they are especially destabilizing in a crisis situation.

The Structure of This Policy Brief

This issue proceeds first by defining CSBMs together with arms control, reductions, and disarmament. This makes it possible to design a gradual reduction of delivery systems leading towards the ambitious goal of a sustainable WMD/DVs Free Zone, as envisaged by the international community in May 2010. CSBMs are one element of an integrated and long-term concept. Secondly, since missiles like all other DVs or WMD have to be seen primarily in a regional context, I conceptualize CSBMs as well as arms control/reductions, which will be dealt with systematically in future Policy Briefs, within a conflict formation-centered approach. For all relationships, two guiding questions are relevant: what specific tasks can CSBMs and arms control/reductions in the missile area achieve and what can they not achieve? As in all relationships – whether they be bilateral (dyads) or multilateral – there are particular challenges, and our analyses will show how and to what extent CSBMs can be applied to meet them.

While this Policy Brief lays the definitional and conceptual ground for discussion, four subsequent issues in this series will cover the broad range of possible missile-related CSBMs. The first of these, Policy Brief No. 19, specifies the lessons to be learnt from military confidence-building measures and their application during the East-West conflict. Policy Brief No. 20 presents modest CSBMs such as no-first use declarations, transparency measures, and communication structures. The two following issues focus on missile-related CSBMs between Israel and Egypt, between Israel and the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Policy Brief Nos. 21/22) and within the Israeli-Saudi-Iranian triangle (Policy Brief Nos. 23/24). While these Policy Briefs emphasize short- and mid-term measures, it will also be important to deal with medium- and long-term efforts, understood as limitations and reductions towards zonal disarmament. For they are seen as an integral part of the overall efforts towards the WMD/DVs Free Zone. Especially reducing arsenals will be examined in subsequent Policy Briefs.

Defining and Conceptualizing Missile-related Confidence- and Security-building Measures for the Middle East

Defining the Basic Terms

Basically, CSBMs aim at reducing tensions and the dangers of armed conflict, but also misunderstandings associated with military activities. The dimension of lacking clear and timely information especially in crisis situations is of special relevance. Therefore, military openness/transparency is a central element of the concept of CSBMs. They are to lead to the “reduction of uncertainty” with regard to general military escalation, crisis escalation, surprise attacks, and low-level violence. Many CSBMs are technical, but they are not necessarily arms-related, the Hot Line established between the United States and the Soviet Union after the Cuban Missile Crisis being a classic example. In the Middle East, CSBMs were agreed to but not implemented in four areas during the Arms Control and Regional Security talks in the first half of the 1990s maritime issues, i.e. search and rescue and incidents-at-sea; prior notification of military exercises and the exchange of information regarding, among others, military personnel; and the establishment of a communication network in the Middle East and of three Regional Security Centers.

There is some overlapping between CSBMs and arms control. Both aim at increasing arms raceategic stability; arms control also involves confidence building but the tools differ somewhat. Arms control and CSBMs both aim at reducing tensions from uncontrolled arms build-ups and from delicate crisis situations. Arms control measures are stability-oriented (arms race/strategic and crisis stability) and address the destabilizing impact of the respective weapons/DVs.

Arms control initiatives are often cooperative ones in a bi- or multilateral setting; since they are stability-oriented in the first place, they can...
imply, a coordinated (‘controlled’) build-up – and in fact, this has been the reality in the East-West context. Two more specifications are important: First, structural arms control relates to limiting the size and composition of force structures, while the operational variant affects the readiness of forces, which coincides with the far-reaching CSBMs specified below. The concept and measures of reducing those arsenals with the final objective of disarmament differ fundamentally from the instruments and the stability-oriented goals of classical arms control. Disarmament can take the form of a regional zone and include a broad range of categories (for instance WMD and DVs), but it can also mean a ‘global zero’ concerning specific weapons.

However, because of the specific history of proposals in the missile realm, the difference between CSBMs such as the non-deployment of certain potentially destabilizing types of missiles and the traditional arms control notion is not clear-cut. It is in fact blurring. This applies also to limiting the missile capabilities qualitatively (e.g. by constraints on ‘modernization’) or quantitatively (by for instance capping the range of missiles or reducing the number of DVs). Prohibiting the deployment of a certain missile type – a qualitative constraint – can be more restrictive than limiting the number of missiles, as part of traditional arms control. Thus, CSBMs are of different scope ranging from relatively non-demanding/modest to far-reaching ones. Transparent information, communication measures, and declarations belong to the first category. For missiles, this can involve the exchange of information on ongoing or planned missile projects and activities especially in crisis situations through hot lines and data exchange centers; regular reporting on missile activities; pre-notification of flight tests and of space rocket launches for civilian purposes (e.g. satellites); and finally declarations on the no-first-use of those delivery vehicles.

Far-reaching CSBMs include de-targeting and de-alerting of missiles; limiting the ranges of missiles tested; moratoriums or bans on flight tests; re-deployment, non-deployment (including the development of indigenous capabilities); and restraints/moratoriums/bans on missile-related transfers. These measures touch upon the weapons themselves – an impact that is normally associated with classical arms control and of course with efforts to decrease military capabilities. The blurring of the distinction between CSBMs and arms control/reductions in the missile area is especially important in the case of the Israeli-Egyptian dyad. This overlapping implies that the strict sequencing of ‘confidence- and security-building measures first – arms control later’, which has been a major hurdle for serious talks, becomes a moot point. Therefore, one has to specify the category of CSBMs one has in mind within a concrete context. Relatively non-demanding/modest measures can be extremely important in crisis situations between countries like Iran and Israel whose hostile relationship does in all likelihood not include any formal communication mechanisms.

Addressing the Relationship between Verification and Confidence Building

While working on missile-related CSBMs and arms control/reductions, it will be important to address the issue of verification: first, of confidence- and security-building measures; and second, in the process of establishing a WMD/DVs Free Zone in the Middle East. 

In general terms, sufficient/adequate verification is a condition sine qua non of any serious concept of arms control/reductions and disarmament and this fundamental role applies to confidence building as well (see Policy Briefs No. 16 and 17) – a fact acknowledged by Middle Eastern experts. Verification can take place during any stage of a weapon’s or DV’s cycle, i.e. from research and development via testing and production to deployment and stockpiling. The importance of sufficient verification for CSBMs is undisputed, but it is not necessarily identical with it – the reason being that such a verification system “should deter cheating by decreasing the likelihood of detecting treaty violations.” It has been concluded for the “currently volatile and unstable Middle East environment” that it require comprehensive and strict verification regimes which initially emphasize detection and deterrence rather than confidence building. “However, the exact balance between the objectives of any verification regime, i.e., between detection, deterrence and confidence building, should be determined according to the type of agreement, the type of weapon system controlled, and the composition of the negotiating parties.” At the same time, “verification cannot act as surrogate for trust. […] some initial trust must be present if a
verification system is to preserve arms control agreements.” This ‘hen-and-egg-problem’ was evident in the Cold War, a major point of reference for our analysis, and it remains a fundamental challenge in the conflict region. At the same time, the entire verification ‘fabric’ and the experiences associated with it during the East-West conflict provides ample proof that cooperation and trust building among adversaries is possible.

The entire ‘CSBMs story’ within the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) reflects the trust paradox. The European process culminated in the signing and implementation of the Vienna Document and highlighted the importance of reciprocal verification. Also, it underscored that in the final analysis political realities are more relevant than verification-related issues: “[…] it is useful to recall that it was in these negotiations that the first significant breakthrough in verification modalities came; […] and it was as a result of these achievements that the first tentative steps towards dispelling the fear, mutual suspicion and lack of confidence in the intent of major powers arising from the massive concentration of armed forces in Europe, were taken.”

But one does not only need to look to the CSCE process covering finally the vast zone from Vancouver to Vladivostok – the Middle East/Gulf has its own experience with verification. One example is the Sinai Agreements of the 1970s which have remained important for a zonal CSBM approach in the conflict region. The need for transparent criteria for sufficient verification is evident, as has been rightly emphasized for the East-West context: “verification is not the ‘critical element of arms control.’ The critical element is an acknowledgement of the uselessness of marginal military advantages between nuclear-armed states. Once this fact of life is recognized and accepted, verification will begin to look like a soluble problem.”

The issues discussed here will have to be seen in the context of the broader verification issues presented in POLICY BRIEFS No. 16 and 17. This includes discussing the most promising technical and human (various kinds of inspections) tools, their characteristics, capacities, and limits as well as the procedures and forums for settling disputes and compliance issues. Severe dilemmas will have to be addressed, especially the following ones: how to distinguish between prohibited military activities and permitted civilian activities (dual-use problem); how to balance the effectiveness of technical and human verification instruments against their intrusiveness (‘spying’). Also, discussions of institutional formats for verification will be useful. Finally, the domestic dimension of political acceptability will have to be addressed, i.e. the treaty/zone negotiated by the political elite has to be considered adequately verifiable by the informed public.

Concretizing the Basic Terms

Building on the Two Major Findings of Two Previous POLICY BRIEFS on Military Asymmetries

This POLICY BRIEF builds on two previous issues on the topic of military asymmetries. Both issues present a list of security concerns/external threats, including the fear of specific weapons of mass destruction and of their DVs. POLICY BRIEF No. 13 centers on Egypt, Israel, and Syria, while POLICY BRIEF No. 14 focuses on the GCC states and Iran. This is line with the problematic nature of the regional security dilemma which is the starting point for the analysis: intense arms build-ups, unilateral self-help, and constant zero-sum thinking contribute to mutual insecurity and fuel weapon programs. The two POLICY BRIEFS also address the major motives and interests that act as driving forces of the military programs of the respective countries. Since these issues are directly relevant for the envisioned Middle East Conference, they can be understood as the required “background documentation” for the Facilitator, his team and the decision-makers at the MEC in Helsinki and as proposals for initial steps for dealing constructively with the central problem of military asymmetries in the region.

POLICY BRIEFS No. 13 and 14 consider the degree and potential for conflict among key states in the Middle East ranging from fairly low/medium (Israel-Egypt) to extremely high/explosive (Iran-Israel). Also, among the weapons of adversarial/hostile countries some are seen as more dangerous than others – not surprisingly, (emerging) nuclear arsenals in the first place, and within the spectrum of DVs those aircraft and missiles that can reach the territory of the adversary. In addition to the identified lists of country-based security concerns/external threats as the most important driving forces, these issues highlight the following motives and interests behind the weapon procurement strategies of the relevant states:

- The quest for regional primacy by currently three states in the region, i.e. Iran, Saudi Arabia, but also Qatar.
• The interest in unconstrained military/foreign policy options applies to Israel especially vis-à-vis Iran but also to the Islamic Republic as a possibly emerging (near) nuclear weapon state.
• The presence of the past applies for instance to Israel because of the Holocaust and its wars with the Arab countries on the one hand – and on the other to Iran which was confronted with a lack of solidarity especially because of the use of chemical weapons by Iraq during the First Gulf War (1980-1988).
• Cultural factors include a strong sentiment of self-defense in Israel – as well as prestige and national pride associated with the nuclear program in the Islamic Republic. One additional dimension relates to the identity and leadership status of Egypt as a core element of its foreign policy culture.
• Domestic driving forces behind foreign policy, i.e. public attitudes, power constellations, networks of the military, industry, bureaucracies, and universities which are involved in the research, development, testing, and production of the relevant military capabilities (the latter applies to Israel and to a certain degree to Iran).

Our research to date suggests two assumptions of continuing importance: first, conflict formations are paramount in explaining state behavior in the entire security area. Nevertheless, weapons and delivery vehicles considered to be especially destabilizing remain relevant. Hence, these arsenals need to be controlled, reduced, and eventually eliminated in a way that is adequately verifiable. Second, the identified security concerns, motives, and interests lead to policies which turn out to be essential stumbling blocks for any successful strategy aiming at a WMD/DVs Free Zone. This explains why we start by putting the specific weapons – and the corresponding CSBMs and arms control/reductions – into the overall bilateral/regional contexts.

The Four Future Policy Briefs on Missile-related CSBMs

In line with the presented CSBM framework, the upcoming Policy Briefs will distinguish between two categories of missile-related CSBMs:
• Non-demanding/modest CSBMs include declarations on the no-first use of missiles, the exchange of information on missile projects and activities (especially in times of crisis) via hot lines or data exchange centers, and pre-notification of flight tests and space rocket launches for civilian purposes.

Box: Overview of Missile-related Confidence- and Security-building Measures

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communication and Data Exchange</td>
<td>Multiplying communication links such as hot lines, extending from local or regional military commanders up to heads of state or government, will increase the chances of risk reduction and aid in settling disputes; indeed, minor incidents or suspicious activities that require immediate clarification could be solved at lower levels, possibly avoiding military escalation. Measures to increase transparency and structures for the exchange of data about military forces (holdings, use, doctrine, movements, etc.) could build on the experience of bilateral and multilateral data exchange networks, which were established during the Cold War. Of course, the exchange of data or direct communications are no substitute for the actual resolution of serious disputes, but they can help alleviate misperceptions or unfounded threat perceptions.</td>
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<td>No-first Use Declarations</td>
<td>Mutual no-first use declarations regarding WMD and/or their DVs could take the form of a minimum approach for no-first use of unconventional missiles against states which do not possess such missiles themselves (and right of retaliation in case of attack), or it could take the more ambitious shape of an unconditional no-first use of any missiles (except in case of invasion).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mutual Visits and Observing Space Launches</td>
<td>Mutual visits on each side’s missile sites and invitations of foreign observers to tests and space rocket launches for civilian purposes (e.g. satellite launches) could represent promising first steps. It is conceivable that, for example, Israel will make (as it has in the past) pre-notifications of coming satellite launches and even invite foreign observers, including visitors from Egypt, Jordan, and the GCC countries.</td>
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<td>De-targeting and De-alerting</td>
<td>De-targeting temporarily eliminates the capability of a weapon to engage a certain target on command, based on its inherent combat aiming features. For different weapon systems this can range from the simple change of its physical position to blocking the data feed into on-board guidance computers. For sophisticated missile systems, de-targeting would mean de-activating a standing command link to pre-loaded data on specific target in the memory of the on-board control system, disabling its intended independent flight path after launch, or even the launch itself, or indicating remote ocean areas as a target for those systems which require permanent targeting. De-alerting renders strategic missiles forces unavailable for operational use within the time parameters required for combat applications, through technical and/or organizational measures. Since time is the key element here, one distinguishes different levels of alert (or combat readiness). De-alerting results in an extension of the time interval between a crucial incident and the launch of a weapon fired in anger. That interval can range, depending on the level of alert, from minutes to weeks. The longer the time frame, the less likely an accidental or unauthorized use of the weapon system becomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-deployment and Non-deployment</td>
<td>Re-deployment can refer to the geographic re-location of missiles, launcher, or bases, or to changes in the modalities of their deployment aimed at verifiably moving missile forces to areas from which they cannot reach vital parts of an adversaries’ territory. In addition, deployment-related CSBMs could comprise the temporary or permanent removal of existing systems from operational use. By focusing on existing missile systems, this option does not affect existing capabilities themselves, but entails their removal from the active force posture and, thus, from short-term operational planning and use. Non-deployment could also include the non-introduction of systems that have not yet been integrated into actors’ missile forces, possibly in the form of a moratorium. Far-reaching deployment-related CSBM options could begin to narrow the gap between conﬁdence building and structural arms control as well as providing ways to restrict the number and quality of missile deployments. States may restrict their deployments to certain areas and basing modes, and may agree to introduce ceilings on deployments according to either geographical or qualitative criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missile Test Ban</td>
<td>A missile test ban would slow down and finally limit missile projects of regional states. To limit longer-range missile project, parameters of 3,000 km and 500 kg would seem reasonable. Such a missile test ban would be similarly verifiable by technical means, and could follow some of the organizational and verifiability precedents established by other test-ban regimes.</td>
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Two questions need to be answered in these Policy Briefs: first, what can CSBMs achieve and what can they not achieve with respect to the five main arms control/reduction- and MEC-related challenges? Second, what is the constructive potential of CSBMs with respect to the political core challenges? Relevant is in this respect the important, but limited role of missile-related trust-building measures in three contexts: the Israeli-Egyptian dyad and the relationship between Israel and the GCC countries (Policy Brief Nos. 21/22) as well as the Israeli-Saudi-Iranian triangle (Policy Brief Nos. 23/24).

The following five main arms control/reduction- and MEC-related challenges are identified:
1. managing and reducing deep-rooted mistrust (and de-escalating crisis situations);
2. providing incentives for a flexible and serious arms control dialogue on the WMD/DVs Free Zone at the Middle East Conference and at other forums;
3. generating potential spill-over effects for talks on WMD and other DVs (such as aircraft) with transparency as the crucial element;
4. tackling norm-building challenges in the context of the two existing regimes, the HCOC and the MTCR; and
5. exploring opportunities for trade-offs and bargaining on missiles and other delivery vehicles as well as nuclear, biological, and chemical warheads.

Missile-related CSBMs do not follow a strict sequence, but should be seen in each dyad as flexible, simultaneous and mutually reinforcing initiatives. We trust Ambassador Jaakko Laajava and his team at the MEC will select and propose the appropriate confidence-building steps at the right time [...]."

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The role of missile-related CSBMs in this dyad can be summarized as follows: “In principle, both categories of confidence- and security-building measures are relevant, i.e. modest steps such as transparency, communication, and (no-first use) declarations; and far-reaching steps such as de-targeting and de-alerting, limiting the ranges of missiles, banning missile tests, and addressing the deployment, re-deployment, and non-deployment. DV/missile capabilities are not directly a matter of great concern for either country. This implies that any CSBMs in this sector may be of limited relevance, which may turn out to be an asset because of their secondary importance in the overall arsenals of both states. We will argue that DVs, and missiles in particular as well as CSBMs, can and should be used for probing and exploring options to the greatest extent possible, in order to meet the challenges listed above. This applies especially to Egypt to which missiles matter less militarily than politically and psychologically. As already explained, missiles are of greater military importance for Israel but not to the extent that CSBMs cannot be implemented with Egypt – Israel’s missile capabilities are not directed against its neighbor and are not driven by Cairo’s delivery systems capabilities.”

Three important non-demanding/modest CSBMs, which Egypt and Israel could agree to as a possible model role for other
As to the Israeli-GCC relationships, the question is: how can missile-related CSBMs contribute to tackling constructively the core challenge in this constellation, i.e. bringing the long-standing Israeli-Arab conflict with its emphasis on the Palestinian dimension and the lack of a formal (diplomatic) relationship between Israel and the Gulf states in line with the comparatively relaxed military situation? The role of missile-related CSBMs in the Israeli-GCC relationship can be summarized as follows: “[T]rust-building steps in the missile realm are of limited relevance and face a number of obstacles in the various contexts: at the United Nations (UN Register of Conventional Arms) or on the multilateral level (especially the Hague Code of Conduct). Yet reduced mutual threat perceptions and a common fear of Tehran’s nuclear aspirations cry out for forums of direct communication. Such exchange is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for assessing the relationship between Israel and the GCC states. Dominant military assumptions can be revised and joint assessments concerning the common menace undertaken. Nevertheless, trust-building steps in the missile area cannot solve the long-standing Israeli-Arab dispute with the most prominent Palestinian dimension. But CSBMs could improve the atmosphere for re-launching promising instruments such as the Arab Peace Initiative, which in turn might lead to a better Arab-Israeli relationship.”

In the Israeli-Saudi-Iranian triangle, it is important to ask: how can missile-related CSBMs contribute to tackling constructively the core challenge, i.e. the highly adversarial relations lacking official dialogue – especially between Israel and Iran, but also between Saudi Arabia and Israel? Resolving these issues is a key to negotiating and implementing any far-reaching CSBMs. Trust-building steps in this triangle in the areas of operations, deployment, and testing of long-range ballistic missiles need to start with modest limits on the modernization and expansion of regional strategic missile forces. Also, missile-related CSBMs between Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Iran could form an important part of a norm-building process for the entire conflict region. A unilateral or multilateral declaration that one’s own missiles are not permanently targeted at each other and are not on permanent ready-to-launch alert would not alter current military capabilities. Yet both

Endnotes

1. They are mentioned in this Policy Brief as part of the overview, but will be dealt with in greater detail in future Policy Briefs in the context of limitations, reductions, and disarmament.
4. If the parties in Helsinki wish, the discussion on missiles can eventually transcend the state level and include the rocket/missile arsenals of organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah, which would certainly complicate the discussions. Still, it is important to note that by focusing on missiles the authors of the Routledge study have been able to include conflict formations on the non-state level in a feasible way. See Judith Palmer Hank and Walid Abu-Dailouh (2012) ‘The prospects for disarmament: The case of Hezbollah’, in Kubbeg and Fikenscher (eds) (2012), 167-185; see also Margret Johannsen, Ghassan Khatib, and Anat Kurz (2012) ‘Designing disarmament strategies: The case of Hamas’, in Kubbeg and Fikenscher (eds) (2012), 186-214.
5. In this Policy Brief, the triad ‘arms control, reductions, and disarmament’ is shortened to the first two elements. As noted later in this issue, I differentiate between two categories of confidence-building steps – non-demanding/modest and far-reaching ones, respectively. Arms control and especially reductions overlap with far-reaching confidence- and security-building measures – as outlined below, the non-deployment of a missile type or a ban on certain categories and activities can be roughly equivalent to reducing the numbers of an existing arsenal.
9. The official definition of ‘verification’ as provided by the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the era of Ronald Reagan reads: “VERIFICATION: The process of determining, to the extent necessary to adequately safeguard national security, that the other side is complying with an agreement. This process of judging adequacy takes into account the monitoring capabilities of existing collection systems and analysis techniques and the ability of the other side to evade detection if it should attempt to do so. This process also assesses the political and military significance of potential violations and the costs, risks, and gains to a side of cheating.” See U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (1983) Fiscal Year 1984: Arms Control Impact Statements, Washington, D.C., p. 367.
18. Policy Brief Nos. 21/22.
19. Policy Brief Nos. 21/22.
Further Reading


Conclusion and the Way Forward

This Policy Brief has provided the conceptual ground for future issues by defining and specifying the role of confidence- and security-building measures in the missile area. It has presented missiles as part and parcel of the MEC Mandate and their potential ability to: 1) manage and decrease deep-rooted mistrust, and de-escalating crisis situation; 2) kick-start an arms control dialogue; 3) provide positive spill-over effects to other areas, i.e. nuclear, biological, and chemical warheads; 4) provide opportunities for initial norm building in a virtually norm-free zone; and 5) serve as negotiating assets by increasing opportunities for trade-offs and bargaining. At the same time trust-building steps cannot solve basic political problems in state relationships. This is in accordance with one of our core assumptions that in principle conflict formations are paramount to arms dynamics. Nevertheless, DV/missile-CSBMs can contribute to mitigating those conflicts.

The overall context of military asymmetries must be taken into account. That is why we started by identifying the security concerns and motives driving the weapon programs in various Middle Eastern countries as the first two steps in dealing constructively with those asymmetries in Helsinki. CSBMs are the third step on the way to establishing a WMD/DV’s Free Zone in the conflict region. As argued in this Policy Brief, trust-building and arms control measures are not always clearly distinguishable. Nevertheless, a vital fourth step will be to develop mechanisms for reductions and zonal disarmament as well as to make the zone sustainable.

Like in the area of CSBMs, DV/missile-related arms control/reduction steps must be important elements of the debate – the hope being that with the dismantlement of the chemical stockpiles in Syria and the nuclear issues regarding Israel but also Iran could be somewhat more easily addressed. Needless to say, adequate/sufficient verification is crucial for all these measures.

About the Academic Peace Orchestra Middle East (APOME)

The Orchestra is the follow-up project of the “Multilateral Study Group on the Establishment of a Missile Free Zone in the Middle East”. The Academic Peace Orchestra Middle East is a classical Track II initiative: it consists of some 100 experts – mainly from the Middle East/Gulf, one of the most conflict-ridden areas of the world. The Orchestra is meeting regularly in working groups (Chamber Orchestra Units) on specific topics in the context of a workshop cycle from 2011-2014. The main goal of this initiative is to shape the prospective Middle East Conference on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles agreed upon by the international community in May 2010.

For this reason, these experts develop ideas, concepts, and background information in a series of Policy Briefs which are the results of intense discussions within the Chamber Orchestra Units. In this framework, the broader normative Cooperative Security Concept will be further developed, embedded, and institutionalized in the region. At the same time, the Orchestra meetings serve as venues for confidence building among the experts. The networking activities of PRIF’s Project Group are documented by the Atlas on Track II research activities in or about the Middle East/Gulf region.

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