

# **NATO Missile Defence**

## **Political and Budgetary Implications**

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meeting summary by Ruxandra Popa, NPA

European Parliament  
Delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly

JOINT MEETING

with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA)

in association with the  
Centre for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF)

November 2012

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DCAF's ongoing series of papers on Crisis Management, published by DCAF Brussels and edited by Giji Gya. This range of papers began in 2011 and initially investigated crisis management in the EU institutions, in three papers in cooperation with ISIS Europe: *Security Sector Reform Missions under CSDP: Addressing Current Needs*; *The Politics of EU Civilian Interventions and the Strategic Deficit of CSDP* and *International Peace Mediation: A New Crossroads for the European Union*. The series now continues with other partners, in a broader spectrum of analysis – investigating global conceptualisations of crisis management and international responses to current crises and development of security systems and human security. The previous paper in the series was on *Understanding NATO's Concept of Crisis Management*.

This paper shows the practical side of discussion, being a collection of some of the presentations and a summary of a recent NATO Parliamentary and European Parliament joint meeting on missile defence.

DCAF would like to thank the colleagues at the NATO NPA for collaboration in this publication.

*Disclaimer: DCAF has published this seminar's proceedings in collaboration with the NPA and the EP. The views on missile defence are of the authors'.*

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# *Introduction*

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In the framework of its cooperation with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and funded by the Swiss Ministry of Defence as a contribution to the Partnership for Peace programme, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) facilitates an annual joint European Parliament – NATO Parliamentary Assembly conference.

In what follows, the reader will find presentations and minutes of the Tuesday November 6, 2012 Joint Meeting between the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the NPA on the Political and Budgetary Implications of NATO Missile Defence.

The Joint Meeting took place at the European Parliament in Brussels.

# Programme

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**Tuesday 6 November 2012 – 09:30 - 12:45**

European Parliament, Brussels

Building Altiero Spinelli (ASP), Room 1E2

Tuesday 6 November 2012 – 09:30 - 12:45

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9:30 – 09:40

**Welcome and opening remarks by:**

- **Jacek SARYUSZ-WOLSKI**, Chairman of the delegation for relations with the NATO PA, European Parliament
- **Julio MIRANDA CALHA**, Vice-President, NATO Parliamentary Assembly

9:40 – 10:25

**Presentations by:**

- **Roberto ZADRA**, Head of the Ballistic Missile Defence Section, NATO, on “*NATO’s Missile Defence System: The State of Play*”
- **Dr. Oliver THRÄNERT**, Centre for Security Studies ETH Zurich, on “*NATO’s Missile Defence System: Political and Budgetary Issues and Challenges*”
- **Dr. Igor SUTYAGIN**, Research Fellow, Russian Studies, RUSI, on “*Missile Defence and the Prospects for NATO-Russia Relations*”

Moderator:

**Simon LUNN**, Senior Fellow, DCAF

10:25 – 12:00

**General debate**

12:00 – 12:10

**Concluding Remarks by Mr. SARYUSZ-WOLSKI and Mr. Miranda CALHA**

## **NATO's Missile Defence System: Political and Budgetary Issues and Challenges**

***Dr. Oliver Thränert, Head of Think Tank at the Centre for Security Studies of the Swiss  
Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich)***

NATO sees missile defence as a capability to pursue its core task of collective defence. At the same time, Alliance members agree that missile defence will be an important addition to NATO's capabilities for deterrence. The effective interaction of offensive and defensive skills represents an important challenge for the Alliance in the coming years.

Unlike than during the Cold War, today's NATO defence and deterrence planning is not solely focusing on Russia. Rather, countries of concern such as Iran are gaining importance. While the likelihood of a direct attack on NATO territory by those nations seems low, they may act aggressively against their non-NATO neighbours. In such a case, NATO may want to act to re-establish regional order. Damage limitation through missile defence then would be of the essence. However, missile defence systems are no panacea. They certainly are no substitute for nuclear deterrence.

### **New Threats**

We do not know yet whether the E-3 plus 3 will be successful with their two-track approach of sanctions as well as incentives to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapons option. Neither do we know whether military action will be taken to end Iran's controversial nuclear projects, nor what the result of such military operations would be. What we do know, is that an Iranian nuclear capability would definitely change NATO's security environment significantly – although it will never be comparable to the threat the Soviet Union imposed during the Cold War. Not only would NATO partners at its Southern flank feel less secure; furthermore, NATO could hardly be indifferent in case Israel or one of those Arab countries that participate in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue or the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative became the victim of Iranian military pressure.

Provided Iran proceeds with its nuclear and missile projects, NATO would need to adapt its extended deterrence planning to the new situation. Extended deterrence in the face of a nuclear Iran would differ tremendously from extended deterrence in view of the former Soviet Union. During the Cold War it was feared by NATO that Warsaw Pact forces could begin a conventional offensive that could escalate to the nuclear level. Today, it is more than unlikely that Iran would attack the still most forceful military alliance on earth, namely NATO. Such an attack would definitely result in an overwhelming retaliatory strike, ending the current regime in Tehran. Hence, it is inconceivable that Iran would initiate such an assault.

Today, many states in the Middle East fear that a nuclear Iran might become more assertive. Leaders in Tehran may calculate that foreign invasion to counter their aggressive acts becomes less likely, the more Iran's nuclear and missile capacities advance. In any event, many observers believe that for Iran, nuclear weapons are weapons of deterrence and power projection. Against this background, the question is not whether the US, NATO, or the international community could deter Iran from a nuclear attack. At stake is, whether a nuclear Iran could deter international intervention aiming at re-establishing regional order against Iranian aggression or assertiveness.

During the Cold War period, the main idea of deterrence was not to use military force in a relatively stable situation. In the future and in a world with more nuclear powers equipped

with long-range ballistic missiles, countries and alliances, such as NATO, will have to face different decisions: will they be willing to use their forces against aggressions and for the protection of international order in a contingency that might result in severe damage caused by the use of nuclear weapons by the aggressor? In any event, deliberately accepting one's own vulnerability, as the West did during the Cold War, does not seem the appropriate strategic approach in such a context. Instead, defensive competencies in addition to offensive capabilities are needed. Missile defence can work as a damage-limitation option and help to maintain some room of manoeuvre against aggressive states.

## **Why Missile Defence?**

Missile defence without doubt has several advantages. Already today it is widely accepted that missile defences are needed to protect forces in out-of-area operations against short-range missile attacks. In addition, missile defences can be expected to become ever more valuable for extended deterrence contingencies for a number of reasons.

### **Damage Limitation**

Most importantly, missile defences provide damage limitation should a missile attack occur. However, it is important to take note of the fact that missile defences will never be able to reliably and comprehensively protect territories and populations. Therefore, terms such as “missile defence shield” seem inappropriate. For the domestic audience, such wording implies wrong expectations of an all-embracing protection. For the external audience, particularly Russia as well as China, a “defence shield” would increase apprehensions that the final aim for the US and NATO is to undermine the nuclear second-strike capability of these countries. But this is exactly not what the Alliance's missile defence is for. In fact, in a confrontation that involves large and modern ballistic missile arsenals, the role of missile defences even for damage limitation would be very limited. Therefore, NATO's aim is to establish damage limitation options in the face of limited but growing missile threats from countries of concern such as Iran. For instance, in a conflict with a future Iran equipped with a few nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles, it would make a difference whether all of them would reach their targets—mostly densely populated cities—or whether it would be possible to intercept not all but at least most of them.

### **Keeping Room for Manoeuvre**

At the same time, missile defences are important to keep room for manoeuvre against aggressors equipped with ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction. If Saddam Hussein prior to his occupation of Kuwait in 1990 had developed a nuclear capability, Operation Desert Storm to free Kuwait under a mandate of the UN Security Council would possibly never have taken place. Populations at Europe's periphery would have been defenceless against nuclear-tipped Iraqi missiles, so that the risk of a military operation directed against Saddam would have been considered to be too high. If the US and its allies in the future would be confronted with a nuclear and more assertive Iran that would put pressure on its neighbours, missile defences capable of effectively reducing the damage of an Iranian attack could help to convince both Western politicians and populations that an Iranian aggression must not go unpunished. To be sure, risk calculation would still be extremely difficult. In any event, missile defences would add an important option.

### **Deterrence by Denial**

In addition to damage limitation, missile defences have an important impact on the aggressor's calculations. Without missile defences in place, the attacking state may assume that all its ballistic missiles would reach their targets provided they work as planned. With missile

defences deployed, the uncertainty on the part of the aggressor increases. War planning under such circumstances needs to take into consideration that some incoming missiles would be successfully intercepted, so that the effect of the attack would be reduced. This function of missile defence can be labelled as “deterrence by denial.”

### **Extended Deterrence**

Furthermore, missile defences have positive ramifications for the credibility of extended deterrence. During the Cold War, Europeans often questioned Washington's promise to escalate to the strategic nuclear level in case a conflict with the Soviet Union would occur. Countless books and articles have been published focusing on the coupling or decoupling effect of US nuclear forces deployed on European territories. In particular it was asked whether US nuclear weapons would be used in the first place if this could result in all-out nuclear war. Some pundits argued that the US would be self-deterred to use its nuclear weapons, calling into question the credibility of NATO's deterrence posture. Why would the US sacrifice New York for Brussels?

Such self-deterrence would not apply to missile defences. These systems are not meant to provide for escalation dominance with offensive forces. Rather, they are purely defensive and do not damage the aggressor. Nuclear escalation would not be imminent. Therefore, missile defences are much more likely to be used to defend allies.

### **Crisis Stability**

Moreover, missile defences contribute to crisis stability. As long as territories and populations are defenceless against a potential nuclear aggressor, the US and its allies would be required to take out the opponent's nuclear forces early on in a crisis with offensive means so as to prevent a nuclear attack. If equipped with missile defences, the US and its allies would not be under pressure to attack the opponent's nuclear weapons early in a crisis situation. If damage limitation through defences becomes achievable, the need to reduce damage by attacking the opponent's offensive capabilities would decrease. Because the opponent would know this, he would not be forced to use his nuclear weapons early in a “use-them-or-lose-them” mode. Hence, in the critical first hours of a severe crisis, the likelihood of escalation would diminish.

### **Preventing Coercion**

Finally, proliferators are motivated to acquire missiles as well as nuclear weapons in the hope that they can use them as instruments of coercion. For instance, the US and its allies could be coerced by a nuclear Iran to abrogate sanctions. With its nuclear capability as a background, Iran could threaten to close the street of Hormuz, so that international oil supply would be severely hampered. To be sure, it is highly questionable whether Iran would have the conventional military means to successfully mine the street of Hormuz in the face of superior Western navies present in the area. But such a contingency would become much more risky in terms of intended or unintended escalation if Iran would possess nuclear weapons and the respective delivery systems. Missile defences could help to reduce such risks.

### **Missile Defence and NATO Europe**

In the public domain, missile defence is often perceived as more or less a US project. This is not true for European NATO partners already contribute a lot to NATO's missile defence:

- All NATO members are carrying their share of the cost to complete the Alliance's missile defence command and control system.
- Nine NATO members are participating in the Maritime Theatre Missile Defence Forum (sea-based missile defence interoperability through exercise program).

- Germany and the Netherlands contribute Patriots.
- France is exploring new early warning satellite systems.
- The UK, Denmark and Turkey are providing bases for radar systems.
- Romania and Poland provide facilities for Aegis Ashore systems.
- Spain is providing a harbour for Aegis ships.
- The Netherlands are committed to upgrade radars of its frigates to interlink with Aegis.

This list may not be comprehensive, but it already looks impressive. And yet, Europeans should still do more. For one, obviously the impact on NATO's decision making is linked to concrete contributions. For another, the US Congress will only provide funds for missile defence assets to be used in Europe on a stable basis, if Europeans would also deliver their share. So, if yet another intense NATO debate about burden-sharing is to be avoided, NATO Europe should increase *its* contribution.

One example could be if European NATO partners could collaborate through "pooling and sharing" in a consortium of SM-3 interceptors. Such type of "smart defence" is high on the Alliance's agenda anyway, but it often does not work due to reservations regarding national sovereignty. Indeed, the fact of the matter is that not all NATO members always participate in every NATO military operation. But in the case of missile defence, we talk about contingencies where all NATO members would be affected. So pooling and sharing should be much more realistic in the missile defence realm rather than elsewhere.

Still, costs would not be negligible. Much will depend on the willingness of NATO partners to cooperate. Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark for instance would be ideal partners to share a pool of SM-3s for their navies. A lot of details would still have to be worked out to make ships interoperable. A decision would have to be made about exactly which generation of SM-3 should be purchased.

## **Russia**

As far as Russia and missile defence is concerned, I would like to confine myself to a few remarks. First, there will be no common NATO-Russia missile defence system for the simple reason that NATO defends NATO and cannot give any other country a say. Second, the Alliance should take Russian threats that NATO missile defences would result in nuclear arms races for what they are: a legitimization of the modernization of Russian strategic nuclear forces that is on-going anyway. Third, therefore, what we should talk about are step-by-step confidence and transparency-building activities. Examples of such activities are: annual notifications of planned missile defence systems; technical briefings, as in the past, explaining why NATO/US defences would not pose a threat to Russian strategic ballistic missiles; invitations to missile defence tests. If such an approach would prove to be successful, this could enhance the overall NATO-Russia relationship significantly, thereby making further nuclear reductions possible.

## **Conclusion**

In a world of more and more missile and nuclear proliferation challenges and possible future contingencies such as a confrontation with a nuclear Iran, missile defences may in many ways act stabilising and make extended deterrence more credible. They add an important damage limitation option and thereby help to maintain room of military manoeuvre.

What specific role missile defences will play for NATO in the years to come, depends on a number of factors. One is the evolution of the nuclear and ballistic missile threat. Another is the relationship with Russia and whether both sides will agree to establish transparency and confidence in the missile defence realm. In addition, budget considerations as well as technical developments will come into play. In any case, a lot of arguments speak in favour of an increased role for missile defences in NATO's posture.



## **Missile Defence and the Prospects for NATO-Russia Relations**

*Dr. Igor Sutyagin, Research Fellow, Russian Studies, RUSI*

The prospects for productive cooperation between NATO and Russia on Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) issues are very bleak at present. This is due to: the Kremlin's need to maintain an image of "the [external] enemy" in the face of Russia's domestic situation; the Kremlin's conclusion mistakenly drawn out from the "reset" experience) that obstructive political line might better serve Russia's interests in the U.S.-Russian relations; and factors related to Russia's changing position on the international stage and the Kremlin's major security concerns, whether real or paranoiac.

### **Russia's International Influence is Eroding**

The shale gas revolution and other developments in the oil industry are all serving to undermine Russia's oligopolistic position as one of the world's largest energy suppliers. Additionally, the Kremlin's position over crises such as Syria are making many question its role as an influential global player capable of helping resolve the world's most serious and pressing problems.

The Kremlin's "soft power" is also at an all time low – Russia is even losing some of its oldest friends. Many suspect it is probably only Russia's nuclear weapons arsenal that keeps Russia as one of the major players in international affairs.

This leads one to question: What would remain of Russia's international prestige if the aegis of Russia's nuclear power disappeared? The answer is probably close to nothing.

Hence, the Kremlin has every reason to be concerned that any doubts about its strategic capabilities could have disastrous consequences for its status and any remaining influencing it may have in international affairs. One should not underestimate the "status recognition obsession" that the Kremlin has in this respect.

### **"Tea always makes its taste during the first three minutes"**

The Kremlin still operates within a "Cold War" mindset, both due to the sluggish pace of political reform and the fact that the Kremlin's upper echelons largely consist of those whose personalities were developed during the Cold War epoch. Most fundamental, is the role this had in shaping Vladimir Putin's personality. As a KGB Directorate investigation officer conducting cases against criminal dissidents he spent the 1970s fighting against "imperialist ideological intervention."

McNamara's lesson is still alive and active in the Russian decision-makers' mind today; the *Johnson-Kosygin Glassboro Summit* of 1967 taught the Soviets a Cold War lesson about the link between strategic offensive and defensive weapons.

The Russians may not be wholly wrong in their concerns: In fact, it would be difficult to justify the size and extent of U.S., British and French deterrent forces except by the existence of similar Russian forces. The lack of any other clear threat against which this force is maintained gives Russia every reason to still believe that the influence of mutual strategic offensive and defensive arms is still valid.

This is why the impact of Western plans in the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) sphere may have on Russian threat perceptions should not be underestimated. Such plans, as represented by U.S. officials, do give birth to some quite understandable and legitimate security concerns on the Russian side.

Take, for instance, the pattern in which the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) is repeatedly presented by the U.S. Missile Defense Agency. It openly states that the “*additional homeland defense*” of the United States territory is among the top priorities for the DoD in developing and deploying the EPAA systems. It was exactly the “*additional [Soviet] homeland defense*” which McNamara and Johnson strongly opposed and called a strongly destabilising factor in the strategic equation – and, as it was said earlier, that lesson is still alive and well in the mind of the Kremlin politicians.

Look at this from another angle: In parallel with the discussion surrounding, and the fulfilment of, the European Phased Adaptive Approach BMD plans, the U.S. and NATO are discussing extending the life of B61 nuclear bombs. The programme is to include, among others, fitting B61’s with a tail-kit which will turn them into precision-guided weapons with an accuracy akin to “that of the JDAM family of weapons.” This would make the B61-12 the first precision-guided nuclear bomb in the history. F-35 stealth aircraft are to become the main B61-12 delivery mechanism. Stealthy delivery means for precision-guided nuclear bombs does appear as a more effective combination for war-fighting than a retaliatory strategy.

Indeed, the increased strike potential enabled by “additional homeland defense” is exactly what McNamara told the Soviets as being an unacceptable and dangerous combination. Put yourself into the Kremlin’s shoes; precision-guided nuclear bombs delivered by Europe-based stealth fighters and EPAA providing the “additional homeland defense” over U.S. territories. Doesn’t that look more like a perfect war-fighting system designed with disarming/decapitating strikes in mind, aimed at damage-limitation via interception of an adversary’s much-weakened retaliatory strike? At least as seen from Moscow.

Is it then so surprising that Russians who remember McNamara’s criticism shouldn’t be worried about—and oppose—parallel plans to deploy EPAA BMD and B61-12 in Europe? Meanwhile the problem has another dimension in the Kremlin’s view; the Mid-Course Ground-Based Interceptors (GBI) were the first choice for ballistic missile defence deployment in Europe. Being based on two stages of Minuteman ICBM the GBI was effectively a derivative of a strategic offensive missile. Seen from the Kremlin it is not hard to see how this might be viewed as attempt by the US to its strike missile systems to Europe under cover of a “defensive” plan.

It is common practice worldwide for air defence forces to employ surface-to-air missiles in the land-attack mode as a weapon of last resort. Recall NATO’s *Nike-Hercules* air-defence system’s land-attack mode exciting precision, which saved the system many additional years in service – the “rule of thumb” is that the maximum strike range in the land-attack mode is double the maximum intercept range.

## **Putin’s Pershing-II Scenario**

President Vladimir Putin at the press-conference after the meeting with the President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus, Moscow, 27 April 2007 stated:

*It is the first time in history when elements of the US strategic nuclear complex appear on European soil. That equals for Russia the Pershing missiles deployment in the past – the threat is absolutely the same for us.*



## Phased Adaptive Approach – Phase IV: Early Intercept Of MRBMs, IRBMs, ICBMs (By 2020) –

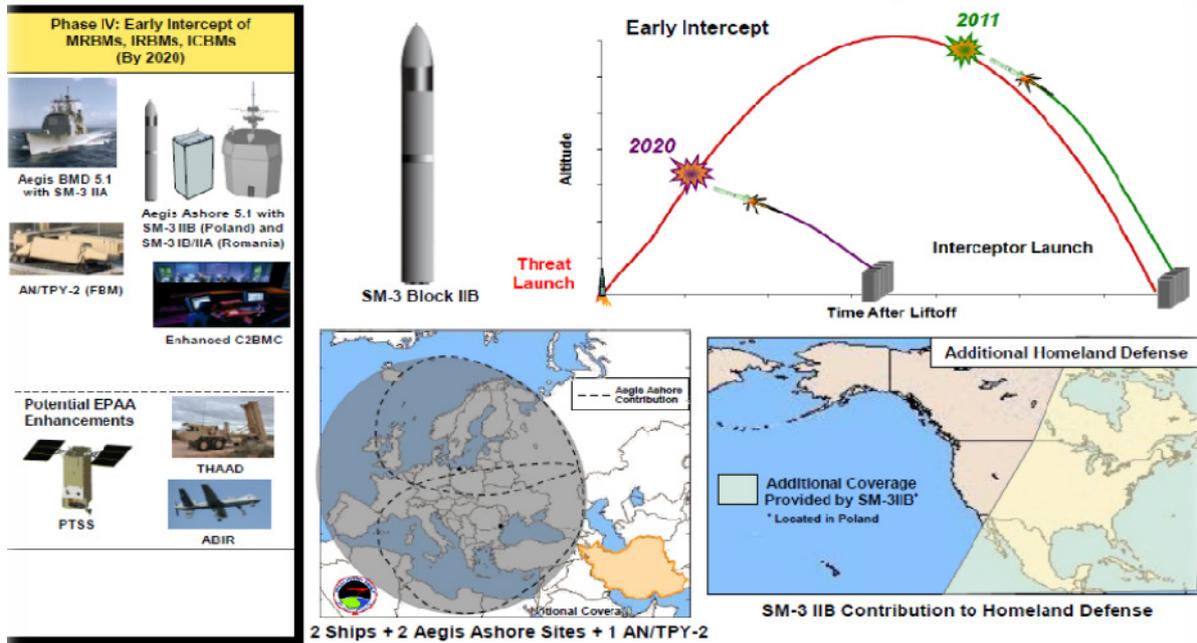


Diagram 1: LTG Patrick J. O'Reilly, Director, MDA, to 13th Annual AUSA Conference, April 26, 2011.

Approved for Public Release 11-MDA-6171 (21 APR 2011) ncr-113571/042111

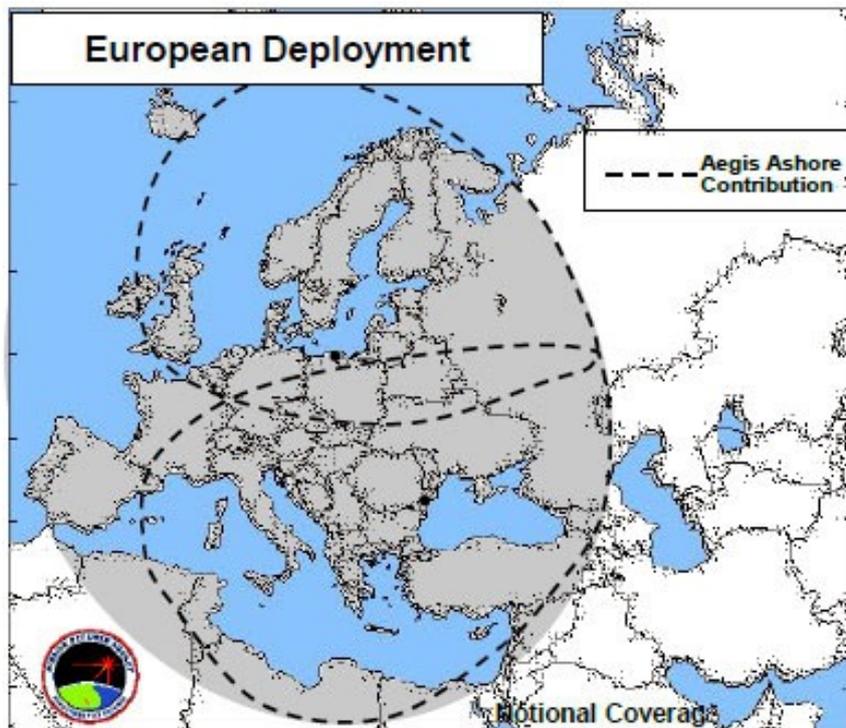


Diagram 2. US Missile Defence as Viewed from the US.

All of which explains why the EPAA might be seen differently from Moscow than from Washington. Moreover, the US's own official presentations are contributing to this dilemma. For instance, it is repeatedly declared that potential Iranian missile attacks are the reason-d'être for the EPAA deployment.

The US MDA also states the EPAA Phase IV interceptor has the ability to “Early intercept MRBMs, IRBMs, ICBMs” at the ascend phase of their trajectory. But EPAA Phase IV notional intercept ranges (of MRBMs, IRBMs, ICBMs at their ascend phase)—as shown on the US MDA chart (Diagram 1)—*does not* reach Iran. And at the same time, however, it *does* cover a substantial amount of airspace where Russian ICBMs would make their ascent in the worst-case scenario.

### **How This is Seen from Washington, D.C.**

Under such the circumstances, the Moscow political-military planners might draw a picture very different from that seen in Washington. From the Kremlin's standpoint, the U.S. have the technical experience to design warheads light enough to fit SM-3 Blk IIB ~100lbs throwweight – and powerful enough to hit soft targets on the Russian soil. (Recall W42, Mk54, W82 warhead designs.) Similarly, discussions about interceptors' “this or that” burn-out velocity, are irrelevant here – paranoid conclusions might be drawn straight out of publically released MDA charts.

And as one can see, the picture must be pretty gloomy from the Kremlin's standpoint: nearly two thirds of Russia's strategic nuclear potential and nearly half of its territory fall within notional strike range, half of its Rocket Divisions within the early intercept range.

### **And How it is Seen from Moscow**

Current discussions over an Asian PAA deployment to defend Japan against a potential North Korean missile threat might be helping the Japanese sleep well at night – but adds a huge additional complicating factor for the Russians; it would result in 100% coverage of Russia's territory and its strategic deterrence forces. (The extrapolation for Asia is made on the base of the same charts presented by the U.S. MDA with regard to the European PAA deployment). One should probably agree: that might be very seriously perceived in Moscow. See Diagram 3.

This is especially bearing in mind that there are many really soft (i.e. not hardened against nuclear strike) targets at Russian strategic force installations, and that Russian political-military planners are known for being enthusiastic about worst-possible-case scenarios.

But are these conclusions viable? After all, it is hard to explain why—if the Kremlin was so concerned about the deployment of potentially unfriendly interceptors near to Russian missile forces' own deployment areas—did it order an increase in air and missile-defence coverage. The answer becomes crystal clear if viewed from the perspective of deployed interceptors being used in land-attack mode in a hypothetical attempt to destroy Russian missile forces before launch. It also explains why the Russian Federation's reaction to the 2011 EPAA plans mirrored the Soviet Union's reaction to the Pershing-II deployment in the 1980s. The Statement of the CPSU Secretary General Andropov on 25 November 1983 and that of Russian President Medvedev on 23 November 2011, nearly miraculously paralleled the steps they announced – and undertook without announcement. In comparing the steps outlined in the two statements, they outline:

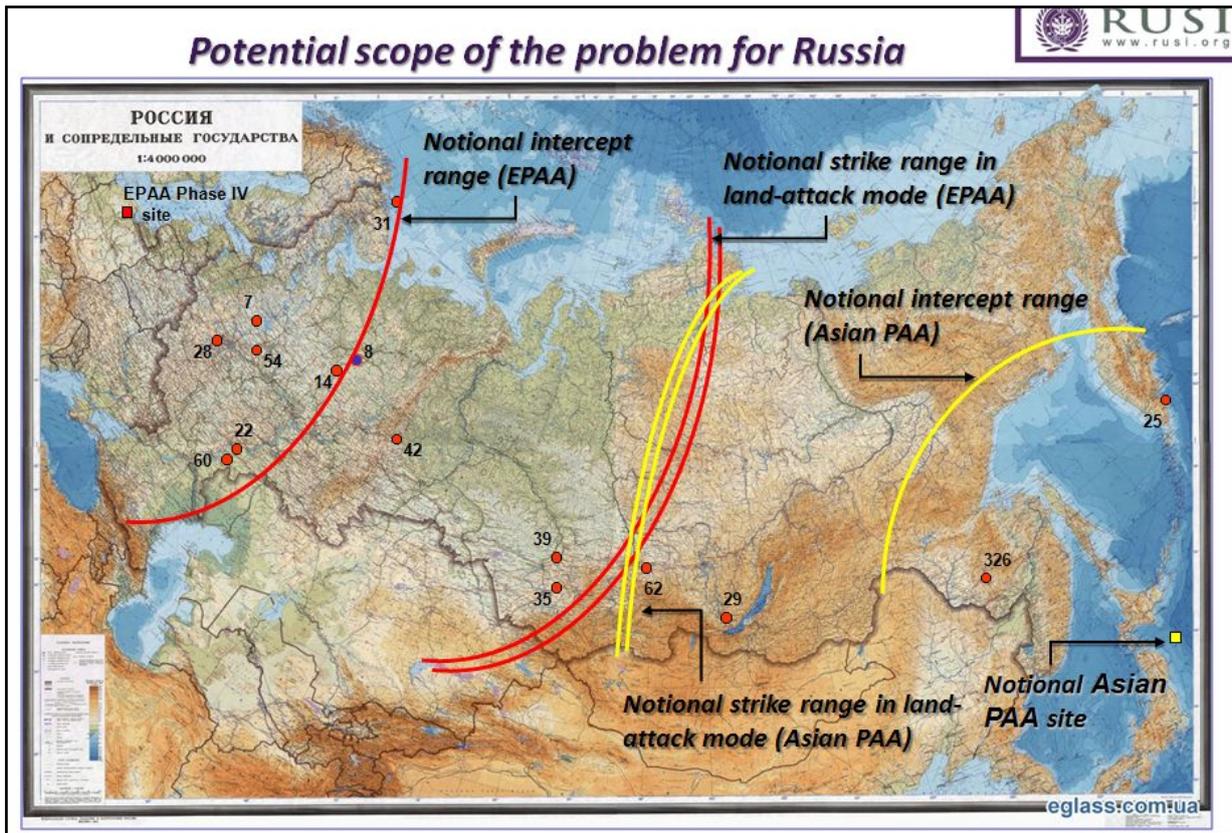


Diagram 3. US Missile Defence as Viewed from Russia.

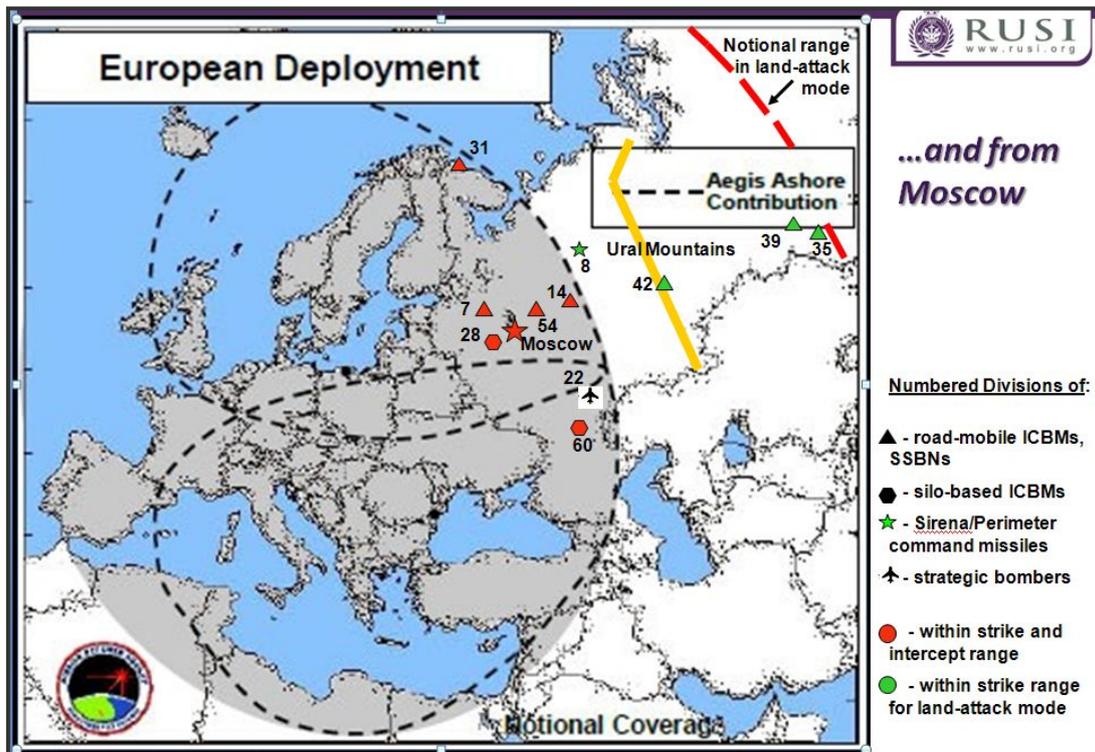


Diagram 4. US Missile Defence as viewed from Russia.

- Enhance early-warning coverage of the Pershing/BMD deployment areas;
- Enhance air- /missile-defence coverage of the Soviet/Russian strategic forces' deployment areas;
- Deploy short-range missiles with the threat to use them for pre-emptive strike;
- Increase amount of SSBN on combat patrol/resume SSBN deterrent patrols.

The described Kremlin policies definitely carry an overt overtone of paranoia. But this is not a reason to overlook it. Firstly paranoia plays a significant role in shaping current Russian policy – and particularly security policy. Secondly, the Kremlin is only playing the West's own game. Recall the heated discussions over the combat capabilities of *Backfire* bombers – the US argued they could easily reach its own territory from Soviet bases. They therefore insisted on the removal of the *Backfires*' In-Flight-Refuelling (IFR) equipment – while without adequate jet engines *Backfires* had an unacceptably short range and badly needed IFR to fulfil at least limited tasks in Europe. This showed that the US was just as capable of paranoia as the USSR. Nevertheless the Soviet Union took those concerns seriously and dismantled IFR and capped the production of *Backfires*.

The same was the case with the inclusion of SS-23/*Oka* Soviet missiles into the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. European concerns about *Oka* and, probably, the prospective development of the *Volga* missiles system (the longer-range follow-on to the *Oka* missile system) led the US to insist on *Oka*'s inclusion in the INF Treaty, resulting in the Soviet Union agreeing to eliminate the programme.

Yet Russian concern today about the prospective developments of US EPAA missile systems might be paranoiac – but no more than the West itself has been in the past, and it is not unreasonable that Russia could ask the US and NATO to reciprocate over EPAA in the same way as the USSR did over *Oka* and *Backfire*.

If the current Kremlin's policy/leadership changed, Russia would actually have a great deal to contribute to European missile defences – particularly against common security concerns such as Iran. Some of these systems are ahead of the comparable European developments in terms of their operational capabilities and/or deployment time. So, the technical prospects for NATO-Russian cooperation do exist, what is a problem are the policies—on both sides—which form a stumbling block on the route to greater and more mutually beneficial cooperation.

## **Seminar report of the Joint meeting between the European Parliament Delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA)**

*Tuesday 6 November 2012, at the European Parliament*

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) and the European Parliament (EP) Delegation for Relations with the NATO PA held a joint meeting on Tuesday 6 November 2012, organised in association with the Centre for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF). Some 15 national parliamentarians and members of the European Parliament gathered in Brussels to discuss plans for NATO's missile defence system.

NATO officials and independent experts highlighted progress achieved in the development of NATO's missile defence capability. At the Chicago Summit of NATO Heads of State and Government in May 2012, the Alliance had declared the system's interim operational capability. Along with the NATO command and control elements, several Allies were contributing capabilities but speakers called for further European contributions to the system. The discussion also highlighted widespread misconceptions about the system's purpose and "value adding" element. Missile defence could not provide full protection for the Alliance's population and territory. Rather, it was about damage limitation, an additional tool and potentially stabilising factor in certain types of crises, and a form of insurance policy. Lastly, participants reviewed the considerable challenges still facing NATO-Russia missile defence cooperation, including ongoing profound disagreements on the fundamentals of cooperation. Progress was slow, but both partners were still committed to dialogue.

The event was opened by *Mr. Jacek Saryusz Wolski*, Chair of the European Parliament delegation for relations with the NATO PA, who emphasized the timeliness of a parliamentary discussion on missile defence. The development of NATO's missile defence capability was on track, but many questions remained, particularly regarding cooperation with Russia.

In his introductory remarks, *Julio Miranda Calha* (Portugal), Vice-President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA), stressed both the strategic importance of missile defence—in light of the growing threat posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles—and the political importance of this capability for NATO – as the latest expression of NATO's Article 5 commitment to collective defence, and a clear demonstration of the vitality of the transatlantic link. He presented the NATO PA's ongoing work on missile defence, including the 2011 report by the NATO PA's Defence and Security Committee on "Missile Defence: The Way Ahead for NATO," and a recent visit by that Committee to the NATO command in Ramstein, the designated operational command for missile defence.

*Simon Lunn*, former Secretary General of the NATO PA and Senior Fellow at the Center for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF) introduced the discussion. He highlighted three broad issues in relation to NATO's missile defence system. First, in the realm of politics, there was now broad support for missile defence among NATO Allies, but the sharing of the burden and benefits of protection would have implications on the Alliance's cohesion. The second issue related to cost, and how to secure adequate funding for missile defence in view of the place it took on the Alliance's list of priorities. Third, disagreements

with Russia over missile defence continued to overshadow all aspects of NATO-Russia relations.

*Roberto Zadra*, Head of the Ballistic Missile Defence Section at NATO Headquarters and co-chair of the NATO-Russia Missile Defence Working Group, presented the state of play of Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) discussions within NATO and within the NATO-Russia Council.

He stated that NATO BMD was clearly moving forward. At the May 2012 Summit of Heads of State and Government in Chicago, NATO declared an interim ballistic missile defence capability. This was an operationally significant first step, which had been preceded by intensive and challenging discussions to define the exact requirements of the interim operational capability. Apart from hardware, such as interceptors, sensors and radars, Allies also had to agree on solid command and control (C2) arrangements. While the “hardware” for missile defence was contributed by nations, C2 was open to NATO common funding.

In Mr. Zadra’s assessment, NATO-Russia missile defence cooperation was progressing much slower. Despite ongoing discussions, fundamental disagreements remained vis-à-vis the form of cooperation and the fundamentals, including issues of legal assurances, of security outsourcing, and how to make NATO and Russia’s missile defence systems work together. As a consequence, the decisions reached at NATO’s Lisbon Summit to resume Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) cooperation, and conduct a Comprehensive Joint Analysis of the future framework for missile defence cooperation, had not yet been fully implemented. A computer-assisted exercise exploring possibilities for TMD cooperation was held in Germany in March 2012, but the lack of agreement on the fundamentals of cooperation on missile defence had delayed the completion of the analysis of the exercise results. Mr. Zadra reminded delegates that, at the Chicago Summit, NATO had made two further proposals: to set up two joint NATO-Russia missile defence centres (for data fusion and for planning operations), and to establish a transparency regime.

Mr. Zadra expressed his hope that NATO and Russia would eventually reach a win-win situation in which they would jointly send a signal to missile proliferators not to develop ballistic missiles or reverse their decisions. Despite current disagreements, Mr. Zadra confirmed that NATO concurred with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov’s recent statements that there was still time for an agreement and that dialogue should not be discontinued.

*Dr. Oliver Thränert*, Head of the Think Tank at the Centre for Security Studies of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich), noted that there was broad and stable bipartisan support in the United States for missile defence. For NATO, missile defence represented an opportunity to pursue the core task of collective defence. Missile defence was no panacea, however, and no substitute for nuclear deterrence as such.

Dr. Thränert pointed out that although NATO had no identified enemy, all eyes were set on Iran as a potential threat. For Iran, nuclear weapons were not only about deterrence but also about power projection. Should Iran acquire a nuclear capability, this would significantly change NATO’s threat environment. While the likelihood was low of a nuclear attack against NATO members, the Alliance could not ignore the threat of use of nuclear weapons against partners in the region – Israel or Arab countries. In this regard, Dr. Thränert noted that the concept of deterrence had changed since the end of the Cold War. Deliberately accepting vulnerability was not considered an acceptable option any more.

Dr. Thränert also dispelled misconceptions about the impact of missile defence. The concept of a missile defence “shield” was misleading, as it gave the false impression that the system

could comprehensively protect territories and populations. This sent wrong signals both internally and to the outside world – including to Russia and China. Missile defence was about damage limitation rather than full protection, but even this function was limited, Dr. Thränert insisted. Most importantly, missile defence impacted the aggressor's calculations through what could be referred to as “deterrence by denial,” i.e. convincing the aggressor that the impact of an attack will be lessened.

Another benefit of missile defence was that because of its defensive nature, it was less likely to trigger an escalation of nuclear forces, and therefore would be more likely to be used to defend against an attack. Missile defence decreased the need for countries under threat to target the nuclear arsenal of the potential aggressor early in a crisis, and therefore lowered the incentive to use nuclear weapons in these early phases of a conflict.

Dr. Thränert noted that NATO's missile defence system was seen by many as an exclusively US project, while in reality the European participation was considerable. Nine Allies were already contributing to the Maritime TMD Forum. Germany and the Netherlands were contributing Patriot missiles; France was considering the commitment of its early warning satellite system; the United Kingdom, Denmark and Turkey were hosting radar systems, and Romania and Poland interceptor bases; Spain was providing the home port for Aegis ships; and the Netherlands was upgrading its frigates to interlink with the Aegis system.

Nevertheless, the new US Congress would likely expect further European contributions. Dr. Thränert recommended in particular that Europeans pool resources to contribute SM3 interceptors to the system, noting however that this would still come with a high price tag. In his view, the future of missile defence would depend on threat perceptions, relations with Russia, budget considerations and technical developments.

*Dr. Igor Sutyagin*, Research Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), presented Russia's concerns about NATO's missile defence system. According to Dr. Sutyagin, in the Russian psyche, strategic forces—both offensive and defensive—helped maintain Moscow's international influence which had been steadily declining since the end of the Cold War. Although the Cold War had ended, mutual deterrence remained a reality, Dr. Sutyagin argued, and the only reason for the French, British and American nuclear arsenals was the presence of Russia's own arsenal.

Russia perceived the missile defence system as an offensive capability for two main reasons. First, Russia associated the missile defence capability with the development of the new precision guided nuclear weapon B61-12 which could be delivered by the F-35 stealth fighter aircraft. Second, ground based interceptors for the missile defence system were based on Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), which, in Russia's view, are offensive, not defensive, weapons.

According to Dr. Sutyagin, there were further military reasons for Russia's concerns. Thus, he argued that in its current configuration, NATO's missile defence system was unable to intercept Iranian missiles in the boost phase. However, it would be in a position to intercept missiles launched from Russia. Should the interceptor missiles be used in a land attack mode—rather than as interceptors—they could reach deep into Russian territory, and the United States had the capability to strike with light nuclear warheads. Yet, Dr. Sutyagin stressed, there were no hard Russian targets within this potential strike area, only soft targets. Combined with the Asian missile defence system, the positioning on Russia's borders of Western interceptors which Russians believed could be adapted for a ground-attack role led Moscow to question NATO's intentions and capabilities. These doubts could only be dispelled through verification, Dr. Sutyagin emphasized.

## **Question and Answer Session**

Responding to questions from parliamentarians about the absence of a clear threat perception among the public and the difficulty of justifying the cost of the missile defence system, Dr. Thränert regretted that public discourse on missile defence focused so heavily on Russia rather than on the strategic environment. He emphasized that the rationale for the system, was the perception that states in the periphery of NATO were developing weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. NATO might be called to intervene in the event of an attack against a friendly country in the region, as Allied countries had been called upon to respond to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Missile defence gave NATO an additional useful tool in such situations, Dr. Thränert argued. The decision to intervene would still be difficult and controversial, but missile defence made it somewhat easier. Missile defence was also important as a political project for NATO.

Mr. Zadra also viewed missile defence as an additional tool and an insurance policy. While the Allies were well aware of the threat environment, they did not feel it was necessary to point to specific countries to justify the development of a missile defence system.

Asked about the cost of the missile defence system, Mr Zadra replied that the part financed through NATO common funding—C2—was assessed at one billion euros over 10 years divided among the 28 Allies. This cost includes 800 million euros for the TMD system, and a further 200 million euros for the expansion of TMD to protect not only deployed troops, but also Allied territory and populations. The cost would of course be higher if other elements of the overall system were added to the equation.

Replying to questions about reliability of the technology, Dr. Thränert pointed out that the system was still in test phase and that certain capabilities—such as the SM3-2B interceptors—were still under development. Mr. Zadra noted that the United States had stated and informed Allies that only tested interceptors would be fielded.

Moving to the issue of debris from missile defence systems, Dr. Sutyagin regretted that Russia had not been included in discussions on this matter. This, for him, was indicative that Allies were not psychologically prepared to cooperate with Russia on missile defence. Dr. Sutyagin also regretted that Russia's proposal for Europe to acquire Russian made interceptors had been rejected.

Mr. Zadra strongly disagreed with the assertion that NATO was not prepared to cooperate with Russia on missile defence, recalling the very clear statements by NATO at the highest levels on this issue. He confirmed that debris was one of the issues currently discussed further amongst the 28 allies. Only once progress would be made on the fundamental issues addressed in the Joint Analysis, could talks genuinely move forward also on more specific aspects.

Replying to questions about verification and inspections of missile defence sites, Mr. Zadra suggested that this issue needed to be explored further between the 28 allies and Russia. If the goal was to increase trust and confidence through transparency, it was indeed important to be open-minded about possible solutions and on the way forward. If the intention were to undermine the other side's strategic potential, this would be done through other traditional means, not by using missile interceptors designed for missile defence.

Dr. Thränert added that it was a mistake to discuss missile defence with Russia in purely military and technical terms. Talks needed to be put back into a political context. In this regard, it was also interesting to note China's concern about potentially close NATO-Russia cooperation on missile defence.

Asked about US cooperation with Asia on missile defence, Dr Thränert noted that Japan felt more threatened by North Korean missiles than certain countries in Europe feel threatened by Iran. Europeans should ask themselves whether they want Asia to become the United States' closest partner on missile defence, Dr. Thränert stressed.

Referring to a NATO PA delegation visit to Moscow in October 2012, Sverre Myrli (Norway), Chairman of the NATO PA's Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities, recalled the aggressive tone of discussions and statements by Russian officials that missile defence talks had undermined confidence in NATO-Russia relations. Both Mr. Zadra and Dr. Thränert agreed that missile defence was only one of a range of issues in NATO-Russia relations, and that not reaching agreement on this one issue could risk undermining discussions on other bigger issues.

In conclusion, Mr. Miranda Calha noted that, just as the United States had recently redefined the orientations of their defence strategy, Europeans needed to restart a strategic discussion on Europe's role in the world. He also stressed that the thinking behind the reset in NATO-Russia relations remains true. On a range of security challenges, Russia could not be ignored and the NATO PA would continue to play its part in promoting dialogue, including on those issues on which the Allies and Russia disagreed.

Mr. Saryusz-Wolski in contrast, opined that Russia's goal was to drive a wedge between the Allies in order to extract further concessions. He stressed that missile defence raised issues of trust not only between NATO and Russia, but also within NATO. In particular, it was an important test for the new member states' trust in the organisation. In conclusion, he expressed regret over the poor cooperation between NATO and the European Union, and suggested that future EP/NATO PA seminars should address further topical political priorities.