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Nonproliferation and Arms Control

1. P-5 Disarmament Statement

The five nuclear powers agreed Thursday to eventually eliminate their nuclear arsenals, a decision hailed by several countries without such weapons. But the agreement specified no timetable for implementation and delegates said it would take many years to achieve a nuclear-free world.

"Nuclear Powers To Eliminate Weapons"

In a presentation to the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Disarmament, Canadian Ambassador Douglas Roche commented on new language adopted at the Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference. The most important line in the new language involves the "unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals," said Roche, who is also chairman of the Middle Power Initiative. "The means that the nuclear powers have accepted that nuclear deterrence can be challenged."

"Challenge to Nuclear Deterrence Accepted, Canadian Senator Says"

The British-American Security Information Council (BASIC) argues that the world's nuclear-armed powers are moving slowly on nuclear disarmament, driven in large part by fear that they are losing control of the bomb. "Russia is showing a re-found enthusiasm for nuclear weapons, and China continues its modernization efforts."

"Nuclear Panic Brings Surprise Deal"

2. NPT Review Conference

BASIC has an unofficial version of the text approved by consensus at the Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference. A few paragraphs approved for inclusion in the report remain bracketed until the final language from the Conference is confirmed. Acronym Institute has the text of Paragraph 15 of the final document from the NPT Review Conference, which enshrined the forward-looking elements which may be regarded as a Program of Action (Next Steps) on Nuclear Disarmament.

"Review of the operation of the Treaty, taking into account the decisions and the resolution by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference"

"Programme of Action (Next Steps) on Nuclear Disarmament"

Rebecca Johnson writes that the conclusion of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference was viewed as a triumph for the non-nuclear weapon states who had effectively pushed through an unequivocal undertaking and next steps on nuclear disarmament, and for the Conference President. "The 2000 Review Conference's achievement is all the more remarkable for taking place at a time of impasse in the disarmament field and deep political divisions between some of the nuclear powers, especially over the ABM Treaty and NATO expansion." Earlier updates trace the process of reaching this consensus.

"Successful Conference: Now Words into Actions"

"Endgame"

"Strategic Blockade"

"Power and Security Assurances"

"Midnight Oil on Troubled Waters"

3. START Process

Russian President Vladimir Putin welcomed US National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on Thursday, but the issue of arms control talks was confined to the Berger's lower-level meetings. Eugene Miasnikov explores whether, in light of START II ratification by the Russian parliament, START III can be successfully concluded. To answer this question, he reviews current US and Russian attitudes toward nuclear disarmament. Dr. Alexei G. Arbatov, Deputy Chairman, Committee on Defense, Russian Federation Duma, says that ratification of START II and CTBT in Russia was motivated by interest and arguments and commitments that may not be very encouraging for the US. "The future process may entail great new difficulties, which the two countries will have to overcome."

"Berger Discusses Missile Shield, Meets Putin"

"START III: Opportunities and Consequences for Nuclear Disarmament"

"The Next Steps in Arms Control: A Russian Perspective"

In a release issued jointly with the Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers, Bruce Blair, President of the Center for Defense Information, argues that the US Defense Department's claim that US nuclear forces cannot be reduced to less than the 2,000-2,500 level envisioned under a START III treaty is based on outdated guidance and Cold War assumptions."

"Cold War Era Assumptions Drive U.S. Nuclear Force Levels"

4. US-Russian Nuclear Agreements

Dr. James Clay Moltz at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies of the Monterey Institute of International Studies presents the findings of a major study to assess the contributions to nonproliferation made by the US assistance programs to the former Soviet Union. William C. Potter and Fred L. Wehling review the US Department of Energy's (DOE's) Material Protection, Control, and Accounting (MPCA) Program of cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy (Minatom) and other Russian and Newly Independent States organizations. The authors argue that the program has resulted in a number of significant accomplishments, including progress in safeguarding plutonium and highly enriched uranium. "Nevertheless, the foundation for nonproliferation safeguards in Russia and other post-Soviet states remains at best a very rudimentary one. It has major gaps in its coverage, is uneven in its application, and in some crucial respects relies upon inappropriate building blocks for its strength."

"Introduction: Assessing US Nonproliferation Assistance to the NIS"

"Sustainability: A Vital Component of Nuclear Material Security in Russia"

5. Russian Nuclear Submarines

Russia announced that it would scrap 18 decommissioned nuclear submarines this year, according to a report by ITAR-TASS. This includes 12 submarines in the Northern Fleet and 9 in the Far Eastern Fleet. The Russian government also said that it planned to complete the dismantling of all the nuclear submarines taken off combat duty and the removal of their fuel by 2007. At the present time, around 150 vessels await dismantling.

This article is available from World News Connection

6. Japanese Nuclear Potential

Corwin Vandermark argues that despite Japan's advocacy of nuclear disarmament, real world circumstances have convinced Japanese policymakers to quietly lay the foundations for the future development in a relatively short period of time of a nuclear arsenal and the means to deliver it.

"Under the Umbrella: Japan's Nuclear Potential"

7. Iranian Nuclear Program

The Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohammed el-Baradei, said that Iran's nuclear program "has peaceful aims and meets international standards and laws." The statement reportedly was given while visiting the site of the nuclear power station in Bushehr, currently under construction with Russian assistance.

This article is available from World News Connection

Missile Defense

8. Feasibility of US Missile Defense

Theodore A. Postol, professor of science and national security studies at M.I.T., said that he found a major flaw in the US Defense Department's antimissile plan and is calling on the White House to appoint a high-level scientific panel to investigate what he says were fraudulent efforts to cover it up. Postol made his accusations in a May 11 letter to John D. Podesta, the White House chief of staff, after reviewing data gathered by an antimissile whistle-blower. PDF versions of Postol's letter and attachments are included.

"Antimissile System's Flaw Was Covered Up, Critic Says"

"Letter to John D. Podesta, the White House Chief of Staff"

"Explanation of Why the Sensor in the Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle (EKV) Cannot Reliably Discriminate Decoys from Warheads (PDF format, 623 kB)"

"Technical Discussion of the Misinterpreted Results of the IFT-1A Experiment Due to Tampering With the Data and Analysis and Errors in the Interpretation of the Data, (PDF format, 1,279 kB)"

"Collected and Annotated Defense Criminal Investigation Service Documents Associated With the Investigation of Tampering With the Scientific and Technical Data and Analysis from the IFT-1A National Missile Defense Experiment, (PDF format, 1,150 kB)"

The US Department of Defense (DOD) is conducting a line-by-line analysis of the critique issued by Dr. Ted Postol, said DOD spokesman Kenneth Bacon. Postol's critique focused primarily on a test involving an interceptor that is no longer part of the program, Bacon said. Bacon declined comment on whether or not a missile defense system could undermine PRC deterrence by intercepting its limited number of missiles.

"DOD Spokesman on Missile Defense and Deterrence"

"Full briefing text"

9. US Missile Defense Deployment

The US Department of Defense announced that a decisive test of a national missile-defense system had again been delayed. The Ballistic Missile Defense Organization had planned to conduct the test on June 26, but late last month the project's managers discovered a wiring problem in the interceptor missiles to be tested, so the scheduled test has now been pushed back at least another week and perhaps longer.

"New Delay for Test of U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense System"

Even if he is unable to convince Russia to change a treaty barring a national missile defense, US President Bill Clinton will "go ahead with a deployment decision" on such a program if it is in the national interest, a senior official said Thursday. Dimitriy Rogozin, chairman of the Russian Duma's International Affairs Committee, said such a move could have dangerous consequences.

"U.S. Firm on Russia Missile Treaty"

10. US Views of Missile Defense

In the summer issue of the journal Foreign Policy, former US Defense Department officials John Deutch, John P. White, and Harold Brown urge US President Bill Clinton to cancel his current proposal on missile defense as expensive, unworkable and unnecessarily alienating to Russia. Instead, they urge the development of ships with advanced interceptor missiles. Frances Fitzgerald's new book, "Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War," disputes the argument that President Ronald Reagan's pursuit of anti-missile defense systems triggered the collapse of the Soviet Union.

"Ex-Defense Officials Decry Missile Plan"

"Delay U.S. missile shield: ex-Pentagon chiefs"

"Star Wars Didn't Work Last Time And It Still Won't"

11. European Views of Missile Defense

Theresa Hitchens and Stuart Samuels reported that NATO foreign ministers in Florence on May 24-25 are set to discuss formally for the first time US plans for a National Missile Defense (NMD) system. "While many European officials privately express worries about Washington's plans, articulation of those concerns by European leaders up to now also has been muted due to political sensitivities about dividing the alliance."

"NMD: Allied Fears in Focus"

12. Russian Missile Defense

James T. Hackett argues that critics of US missile defense plans ignore Russia's missile defense, which has been there for over three decades "with no adverse affects on arms reductions or global stability. It began in 1968 when 64 Galosh ABM interceptors, each armed with a nuclear weapon comparable to a million tons of TNT, were deployed at four sites some 50 miles north and west of Moscow."

"Moscow's Overlooked Missile Defenses"

13. Middle East Missile Defense

Egypt's Ambassador to the United Nations, Ahmed Abul Gheit, said that Egypt favored the elimination of weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East rather than the establishment of a missile defense system against such weapons as advocated by the US. All countries in the region with the exception of Israel have joined the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, he said, and therefore no one will threaten to use nuclear force.

This article is available from World News Connection

Security

14. US Bill on PRC

Nicholas Berry argues that the question of whether or not the US should grant the PRC permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) has always been primarily a security issue.

"President Clinton and national security advisor Sandy Berger have wisely expounded on the national security theme as the crucial vote approaches."

"The Passage of Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with China is a Security Issue"

15. US Hegemony

Patrick L. Smith argues that the notion of the US as an imperial power is widely accepted "if only because it is now too preposterous to deny what lies before our eyes." Chalmers Johnson writes that in the decade following the end of the Cold War, the US seriously misread the nature of the world and its role in it. "Instead of leading through diplomacy and attempting to set a good example, the U.S. has resorted most of the time to bluster, military force and financial manipulation."

"A Question of Leadership"

"A Recipe to Prevent Blowback"

16. US Defense Budget

On May 18, the US House of Representatives passed its version of the fiscal 2001 Defense Authorization bill (HR 4205) 353-63. The Senate is not likely to take up its version before the Memorial Day recess. The Council for a Livable World analyzes the bills.

"Analysis of the fiscal 2001 Defense Authorization Bills"

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