

NAPSNET Weekly FLASH Update 10 April, 2000

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Arms Control

1. International Arms Control Agreements

Jozef Goldblat writes that the significance of the arms control agreements reached to date has been overshadowed by negative trends which threaten to bring the nuclear disarmament process to a halt. Thus he argues that several alternatives for reversing such trends should be considered. Daniel Plesch, of BASIC argues that it is necessary to rebuild the foundations of non-proliferation and disarmament policy through open global negotiations at the UN on a verifiable multilateral ban on nuclear weapons involving India, Pakistan and Israel.

"The State of Nuclear Arms Control and Disarmament: Reversing Negative Trends"

"Anarchy In Action: Western Policy On Weapons Of Mass Destruction"

2. Conference on Disarmament

Jenni Rissanen reviews the latest round of negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament.

"Once again, delegations left the meeting with a sense of disappointment after failing to adopt a programme of work or start substantive work."

"CD Still Deadlocked"

3. US Arms Control Policy

US Senior Advisor for Arms Control, Non-Proliferation and Security Affairs John Holum said in an April 5 Worldnet Dialogue with Sydney and Canberra that the US is still committed to arms control as part of its security policy. Leo Rennert writes in the Sacramento Bee that criticism of US disarmament policies are likely to dominate the Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference later this month at the UN.

"Transcript: Arms Control Advisor Holum April 5 on Non-Proliferation"

"U.S. Now On Defensive Over Nuclear Arms Spread"

US Senator Pete Domenici, in a keynote address at the Nuclear Security Decisionmakers' Forum, said that the US Congress is highly supportive of activities that address the threat of proliferation of nuclear capabilities from the former Soviet Union. He added, "But where questions about a program's effectiveness or goals have surfaced, Congress is far more cautious."

"Nuclear Security Decisonmakers' Forum -- Keynote Address [excerpt]"

4. START II Ratification

US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott said on Friday that Russian officials have said that the process of ratifying START II was under way.

"Russia Sees Swift START II Approval-Talbott"

5. Arms Treaty Publication

The U.S. Navy has published the first issue of its latest publication, "Treaty Times." The publication, which is published by the Naval Treaty Implementation Program, gives status and updates on the various arms control treaties signed by the United States and provides contact names and numbers for people in the Navy for further information.

"US Navy Launches 'Treaty Times'"

Nuclear Weapons

6. Russian Nuclear Arsenal

A poll commissioned by the PIR Center for Policy Studies in Russia and the Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, California found that the Russian public supports non-proliferation and disarmament but believes that Russia needs to retain its nuclear capabilities. A paper by Daniel Sumner summarizes the main findings and considers the broader implications they may have for the formulation of Russian nuclear policy in the coming months.

"Russian Perceptions of Nuclear Weapons"

Rebecca Johnson of the Acronym Institute criticized Russian President Vladimir Putin for pledging to strengthen the Russian nuclear weapons complex, arguing that it "doesn't square with the binding treaty obligation in Article VI of the NPT."

"Nuclear Foolishness"

7. PRC Nuclear Arsenal

The National Security Archives has compiled publicly available information that shows tremendous disparities between PRC and US strategic nuclear forces. "If Beijing is 'bent' on acquiring nuclear forces that will bring it to parity with Washington or with Soviet Cold War force, it has a tremendous distance to go.

"The Chinese Nuclear Weapons Program: Problems of Intelligence Collection and Analysis, 1964-1972"

Missile Defense

8. US Missile Defense

Charles D. Ferguson and John E. Pike write that although presidential election year considerations will presumably influence US President Bill Clinton's decision on whether to deploy a national missile defense, the relevant criteria are: does the missile threat to the US justify deployment; has the development effort readied the technology; how will deployment affect progress in arms control; and can the US afford the financial burden?

"National Missile Defence: Developing Disaster"

Therese Delpech reviews the debate in France regarding Ballistic Missile Defenses (BMD). She states, "it was clear to French leaders and experts that, whatever their different views on the subject, extremely important considerations were at stake. Among them a possible alteration in the balance of offensive/defensive capabilities ... and a serious difficulty in assessing the real consequences."

"US Ballistic Missile Defence: A French View"

9. ABM Treaty

Alexander A. Pikayev reviews US-Russian discussions on the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and argues that the disagreements between the two parties are still deep. "Despite growing speculations that the new Russian administration of Vladimir Putin might agree under certain conditions with the US proposals, there is little practical evidence that Moscow has decided to modify its position in accordance with American requests."

"ABM Treaty Revision: A Challenge to Russian Security"

The Heritage Foundation warns that talks between US President Bill Clinton and Russian President Vladimir Putin on amending the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty could leave the US permanently vulnerable to missile attack.

"Beware of a U.S.-Russia Deal on Missile Defense"

10. Spaced-Based Lasers

Colonel Daniel Smith of the Center for Defense Information argues that the US is developing a new triad is emerging for National Missile Defense. He states, "it is the third element of the new triad that is most troublesome, for it envisages placing laser weapons in space."

"Lasers for Defense"

Military

11. PRC Military Strength

James H. Nolt, Senior Fellow, World Policy Institute, writes that the PRC remains militarily weak despite rapid economic growth, the pattern of which is actually undermining the old military-industrial state. He argues that the PRC has been demilitarizing since the 1970s, and its military capabilities have been declining relative to those of the US and most of its Asian neighbors. Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis review the PRC's military strategy, arguing that it is keyed to the attainment of three interrelated objectives: the preservation of domestic order; defense against external threats; and the attainment and maintenance of geopolitical influence as a major state.

"U.S.-China-Taiwan Military Relations"

"Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future"

David Shambaugh of Foreign Policy Studies writes that Taiwan will continue to hold a number of significant qualitative military advantages against the PRC for most of the next decade. He argues, however, that the PRC is closing the gap, and if current trends continue, sometime in the second half of this decade the conventional force balance will tip in the PRC's favor unless the US transfers massive amounts of high-tech weaponry to Taiwan. Nicholas Barry argues that US politicians and policymakers who emphasize Taiwan's vulnerability to the PRC focus solely on capabilities and ignore the more important question of intentions.

"A Matter of Time: Taiwan's Eroding Military Advantage"

"Leaked Pentagon Study on Taiwan's Military Vulnerability Ignores Chinese-Taiwanese Intentions"

12. Pakistan Missile

Pakistan unveiled its Shaheen-II medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) at this year's annual Pakistan Day parade on March 23. It appears to be road-mobile with two solid-fueled stages.

"Pakistan unveils Shaheen-II"

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