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Nuclear Weapons

1. Alleged Russian Nuclear Tests

The New York Times reports that some intelligence officials and nuclear analysts in the US have concluded that Russia is lying when it said it conducted only non-nuclear underground tests on an Arctic island and is instead detonating small nuclear blasts. However, other experts say that charge is reckless and probably wrong. The Times reports that US officials are unsure of what to do if Russia is conducting nuclear tests, and points out the irony that the nuclear test ban treaty recently rejected by the US Congress would have allowed the US to investigate the charges by inspecting the site. Russia says it is conducting so-called subcritical tests that are allowed under the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Some analysts in favor of the US rejecting the CTBT, point out this dispute as evidence for why the treaty's enforcement would be impossible.

"Dispute on Russian Tests Divides Nuclear Experts"

Military

1. US Submarine Accident

Rear Admiral Charles H. Griffiths Jr. said that Commander Scott Waddle, skipper of the US nuclear submarine Greeneville when it struck the Ehime Maru, is not criminally negligent in the accident. Griffiths, the US Navy's chief investigator for the accident, said Waddle bears ultimate responsibility for his crew's actions, that does "not necessarily equate" with criminal liability. Rear Admiral David M. Stone stated that there were a number of missteps leading to the crash: An important piece of sonar equipment was on the blink, an unqualified trainee was manning one sonar station, and many crew members normally on board were not on the voyage.

"Admiral: Sub Commander Not Criminally Negligent"

"Sub Lacked Full Crew, Officer Testifies"

Proliferation

1. US-DPRK Missile Talks

Steven Mufson wrote in the Washington Post that in a letter to US President George W. Bush, House International Relations Committee Chairman Henry J. Hyde, House Republican Policy Committee Chairman Christopher Cox, and Representative Edward J. Markey urged Bush to not commit himself to the 1994 Agreed Framework with the DPRK, to retain the flexibility to renegotiate the agreement, and to provide conventional power plants instead of nuclear facilities. US Secretary of State Colin Powell said in a press conference that "We are monitoring the Agreed Framework, and we've continued to support the 1994 Agreed framework."

"Flexibility Urged on N. Korea"

"POWELL SAYS BUSH ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTS 'AGREED FRAMEWORK' WITH NORTH KOREA"

The New York Times reported that Wendy R. Sherman, senior policy coordinator on the DPRK for the Clinton administration, said this week that a US-DPRK agreement to end the DPRK's long-range missile program was in reach near the end of the Clinton administration. An unnamed US government specialist said that several important issues remained unresolved, including how to verify the agreements, whether the DPRK was willing to destroy missiles already produced, and the value of the non-monetary aid that the DPRK should receive in lieu of cash. Leon V. Sigal, the author of a book on Korean diplomacy, said, "They did not run out of time; they ran out of courage." He pointed to statements that Clinton did not send Sherman to the DPRK to conclude the deal because the Clinton administration would not consult with the Bush team before the election was decided for fear of lending legitimacy to Bush's claim to the presidency.

"How Politics Sank Accord on Missiles With North Korea"

US President George W. Bush told ROK President Kim Dae-jung on Wednesday that he would not resume negotiations with the DPRK on missile talks anytime soon. Bush was supportive of Kim's attempts to warm relations with the DPRK, but told Kim that the US still regards the DPRK as a threat. Darryl Kimball, executive director of the Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers, said, "It is disappointing and self-defeating for President Bush not to pursue the possibility of verifiable agreement to freeze North Korea's missile program, which would be a lot more efficient than a high-priced missile defense system." When compared with statements in preceding days by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, analysts saw the series of remarks as a sign of a failure of coordination within the Bush administration. US Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. said, "I still don't know if this is good cop, bad cop or confusion or what." For full coverage of the US-ROK summit and discussion of the DPRK missile deal, please see the relevant NAPSNet Daily Reports.

"Bush Casts a Shadow On Korea Missile Talks"

"NAPSNet Daily Report, Friday, March 9, 2001"

"NAPSNet Daily Report, Wednesday, March 7, 2001"

"NAPSNet Daily Report, Tuesday, March 6, 2001"

The Washington Post published an editorial which argued that the Bush administration has some good reasons for the diplomatic pause with the DPRK, including the difficulty it faces in verifying simple aspects of its previous agreements with the DPRK and that the warming of inter-Korean relations has not led to any change in DPRK military deployments along the border. However, the editorial argues, just as DPRK leader Kim Jong-il is seeming interested in opening the DPRK, engagement is offering the DPRK the chance to avert economic collapse, and the DPRK is holding open the possibility that the military standoffs could be peacefully defused, the Bush administration is sending a message that is mixed but harsh. The editorial concludes by arguing that there seems no reasonable alternative to continuing with the Clinton policy to explore, if more deliberately and cautiously, whether a halting of the DPRK's missile programs is feasible.

"Putting Korea on Hold"

2. PRC Aid to Iraqi Air Defenses

PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan rejected US allegations that PRC companies helped improve Iraqi air defenses in violation of UN sanctions. Tang said, "Relevant agencies in China have carried out some serious investigations. Chinese enterprises and corporations have not assisted Iraq in building the project of fiber optic cable for air defense." Tang also warned the US of grave consequences if it sells Taiwan advanced weapons systems. Tang said, "The American side should come to a recognition of the serious dangers involved."

"China Says Its Companies Have Not Aided Iraqi Air Defenses"

"China Rejects Allegations on Improving Iraqi Weapons"

Missile Defense

1. Missile Defense Debate in Europe

Wade Boese reviews the missile defense debate and reports in the March 2001 Arms Control Today that Europe is beginning to accept the prospect of a US missile defense system, while potential US adversaries such as Russia and the PRC continue to oppose NMD. Boese reports that Russia has countered the proposed US system with a proposal for the joint development of a theater missile defense system for Europe, which, though vague, has been met supportively by the US and Europe. However, US officials later stated that missile defense systems might not have been necessary had certain countries not been proliferators of weapons technology.

"NMD Gaining Ground in Europe; Russia Pushes Alternative"

US Secretary of State Colin Powell has promised the Danish government that the US will discuss its plans for a missile defense system "very thoroughly" with NATO and also consult Russia and China on the issue. The pledge was reported by Danish Foreign Minister Mogens Lykketoft during a visit to Washington. Even though a missile defense system is likely to use a US radar on its territory, Lykketoft said that Denmark has not yet been given a timeline for the system doesn't intend to take a position on whether to permit use of the radar. "The U.S. government doesn't have any intention to ask us about anything specific about missile defense at the moment," Lykketoft said and added that he was "quite satisfied that we so far do not have to say yes or no to a specific technical missile defense project."

"US Pledges To Consult "Very Thoroughly" on NMD"

"Original Source"

2. Russian Missile Defense Proposal

Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeev said, "Our military-technical analysis shows that the threat of a so-called 'problem' state launching an intercontinental ballistic missile attack against the United States, which the United States presents as the main reason for developing NMD, is not real. The only reason the United States has for deploying NMD, in our opinion, is its desire to achieve strategic domination of the world." Russia Journal's Alexander Gotts reports that Russia previously proposed using Russian boost-phase anti-missile defense systems like the S-300 and S-400, but is now considering a rapidly-deployable theater-missile defense group or a system that would destroy an attacking missile at the apex of its flight with a nuclear detonation in space. Gotts argues that the Russian system is more unbelievable than the US proposed system, but that the biggest problem in US-Russian relations is Russia's inability to offer concrete counter-proposals.

"Russia's proposals outdo even NMD's fantasies"

3. US Missile Defense System

The US General Accounting Office said in a report issued this week that the US Defense Department's Space-Based Infrared System Low is "at high risk of not delivering the system on time, at cost, or with expected performance," and therefore this key element of a national missile shield probably won't meet its deployment schedule and may have flaws that won't be apparent until its satellites are in orbit. The Los Angeles Times states that the GAO report is a reminder that considerable technological hurdles must be crossed before a large-scale system can be deployed. John Pike, a space and defense analyst at GlobalSecurity.org, a research organization in northern Virginia, said the infrared satellite system "is an unavoidable part of any missile defense shield that goes beyond the most rudimentary, basic threat," such as that which the Clinton administration's system sought to protect the US against.

"GAO Shoots Holes in Plan for Deployment of Missile Defense System"

The Council for a Livable World published selected quotes from the Annual Report from the Office of the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation. CLW states that the report delivers a critical indictment of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization's testing program for National Missile Defense. CLW states that report includes statements such as: "None of the scenarios in IGT-5 [Integrated Ground Test #5] were completely operationally realistic," "the test program needs to broaden the scope of countermeasure testing..." and, "the program is not aggressive enough to match the pace of acquisition to support deployment and the test content does not yet address important operational questions."

"Selected quotes on National Missile Defense [NMD] from FY2000 Annual Report for the Office of the Director, Operational Test & Evaluation"

"Full report"

US opponents to the Bush administration's intention to build an expanded missile defense system predict that the plans will run into serious financial, technical, and political obstacles in the coming years. "The missile defense system idea is so far fetched that there is a real chance that it will never become a reality," says Spurgeon Keeny of the Arms Control Association, "even if there were to be two Bush-governments." Keeny, who participated in the Nixon administration's negotiation of the ABM Treaty, urges Denmark to reject US plans to use the radar at Thule in Greenland. John Holum, who under the Clinton administration directed the State Department's arms control and disarmament office, also hints at trouble ahead: "Now the others can feel what it's like," he told Danish press.

"US Missile Defense Opponents Foresee Trouble for NMD"

"Original Source"

Arms Control

1. US Nuclear Posture Review

The March edition of Arms Control Today includes an essay on the US nuclear force posture review by Jan Lodal, formerly with the US government as principal deputy undersecretary of defense for policy and as deputy for program analysis at the National Security Council, and currently chairman of Lodal and Company and of CoManage, Inc. Lodal states that because the US has always evaluated a potential adversary's capabilities rather than its intentions, other nations will evaluate US capabilities in deciding their course of action and this puts pressure on future US nuclear planning. Lodal argues that the US should reduce its forces to fewer than 1,200 nuclear weapons, and explicitly eliminate the prompt retaliatory war plans and the de facto first-strike capability they engender to make it easier to achieve the international consensus necessary to deploy a limited national missile defense and to strengthen US diplomatic leverage in nuclear non-proliferation. Lodal provides an argument in favor of the development and deployment of missile defenses, but argues that the US should pursue the system that is most technologically feasible, without the pretense that a Strategic Defense Initiative-envisioned system is being pursued. Lodal concludes by stating that once the US defines its new nuclear force structure, it should pursue arms control agreements in line with this vision.

"Pledging 'No First Strike': A Step Toward Real WMD Cooperation"

"Text Only"

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