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Missile Defense

1. Decision to Delay NMD Deployment

The following links to background stories and commentaries concerning President Clinton's announcement that he would not approve the deployment of a National Missile Defense system at this time.

"Clinton hands NMD decision to successor"

"President Announces Delay of National Missile Defenses"

"World Leaders Welcome Clinton's Postponment of Missile Defense System"

A senior administration official said that concern over arms control fallout from a decision to move ahead on the National Missile Defense system was a central factor behind President Clinton's decision not to authorize deployment. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright's apparently convinced the President that a delay would be positive because it created a window of opportunity to overcome the objections and concerns of the European allies and Russia.

"Woes Undermined Missile Defense Cause"

US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Rick Lehner, spokesman for the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, said President Clinton's decision to abandon a 2005 target date for deploying a National Missile Defense system had little immediate impact on the technical work under way. He insisted that an expected delay of the missile intercept test until January 2001 is not directly linked to the President's decision.

"Next Missile Defense Test in Jan."

Secretary of Defense William Cohen challenged Russian President Vladimir Putin when he restated the emerging threat posed by rogue nations and underscored the fact that Putin had told Clinton in their June summit that Russia agrees with that assessment.

"Cohen Challenges Putin On Missile-Defense Sharing"

2. Analysis and opinions of the NMD Decision

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace predicted in an analysis of President Clinton's delay of the National Missile System there is likely to be little political fallout because Republican attacks have been poorly supported.

"ISSUE OF THE WEEK: President Delays NMD"

Michael J. Glennon, law professor at the University of California at Davis and former legal counsel to the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, concludes that if the next president decides to move ahead with a National Missile Defense system, the United States would have to withdraw from the ABM Treaty if Russia -- or the US Senate -- will not approve an amendment to the treaty.

"Yes, There Is an ABM Treaty"

John Isaacs, Council For a Livable World, said, "The President's speech marked a clear and unambiguous victory for common sense -- and for the beleaguered arms control movement that had suffered a devastating loss when the Senate defeated the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in October 1999."

"Anatomy of a Victory: Clinton Decides Against National Missile Defense"

The Federation of American Scientists issued a press release which praised US President Bill Clinton's decision to delay deployment of the troubled National Missile Defense system, but warned that a dangerous decision to abrogate the ABM treaty and deploy the system was still possible next year.

"A Misguided Ballistic Missile Defense System: Scientists Praise President Clinton's Decision to Delay Deployment "

Anthony H Cordesman, Center for Strategic and International Studies, argued that the decision not to deploy NMD at this time creates a window of opportunity to reconsider how the program is being pursued.

Cordesman made several suggestions as to what should be done differently and how.

"Taking Advantage of Delay: A Success-Driven Approach to NMD"

Bill Gertz, of The Washington Times, reported on a report by the chairman of the US Senate Governmental Affairs subcommittee on proliferation which argued that the Clinton administration and congressional Democrats caused the current problems with US defenses against missile attack by cutting programs. The report apparently shows that the cuts for national missile defense peaked in fiscal 1995, when the Clinton administration requested \$226 million, a cut of \$3.9 billion from the Bush administration program.

"Clinton Faulted About Missile Shield"

The Washington Times carried an editorial by Retired US Navy Vice Admiral J.D. Williams, deputy chief of Naval operations and former commander of the US Sixth Fleet, in which he argued that the 1972 ABM Treaty between the United States and Soviet Union is now outdated, and Clinton has consistently misled the American people on the possibility of missile attack from rogue states. He argued that the US should augment the land-based system with sea-based systems, which would result in a much more effective NMD system that could be deployed sooner for less money.

"The Missile Defense Dodge"

Tom Plate argued in the Los Angeles Times that the US should praise US President Bill Clinton for his decision to delay deployment of the NMD system, "a mammoth national missile defense system that neither the United States nor the world needs." Especially in Asia, he argued, many people will assess this as one of Clinton's finest moments. He discusses Clinton's decision in context of the upcoming election and how it affects relations in Asia.

"Missile Defense Deferral Makes Asia A Safer Place"

The Wall Street Journal editorial analyzed the ABM Treaty and concluded that the United States would never be able to create an effective defense "until the deck is clear of archaic and cumbersome treaty restrictions, and our weapons designers are free to use whatever physical principles will do the job."

"Other Physical Principles"

An editorial in the Chicago Tribune argued President Clinton's decision not to deploy a national missile defense system was the right one and that changes to the ABM treaty should be negotiated with Russia. Nonetheless, the US should continue with research on missile defense and prepare for when a system would work.

"Missile Defense, In Due Time"

An article in Inside Missile Defense stated that President Clinton's conclusion on NMD could draw renewed attention to the issue of a sea-based strategic defense system and provide an opening for advocates of a naval alternative to a land-based system. Supporters of a sea-based system have said could readily field a robust system by leveraging the Navy's existing infrastructure and they assert that it has been politics, especially continued US adherence to the ABM Treaty, that have impeded deploying such defenses. Inside Missile Defense provides an examination of both these arguments.

"White House Decision May Move Sea-Based NMD Into Spotlight"

In an editorial in The Washington Times, James T. Hackett argued that the US should not try to convince other states to accept NMD, but should simply state that every country has the right of self-defense. He argued that the real reasons for NMD "are to protect against a miscalculation caused by collapsing Russian command and control, to prevent missile intimidation by China as it seeks to conquer Taiwan, and to stop missile blackmail by North Korea or any country that tries to limit U.S. freedom of action in world affairs."

"We Need Missile Defense"

3. Russian Perspective on NMD Decision

While President Vladimir Putin praised US President Clinton for delaying deployment of a national missile-defense system, first deputy chief of staff of Russia's armed forces Colonel-General Valery Manilov said the decision was a bluff and that Clinton's statements imply that the US will make its decision regardless of Russia's position.

"Putin Praises U.S. Defense Decision"

"Russian General Says Clinton Bluffing on Arms"

Russian President Vladimir Putin described the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty as a "foundation" of the entire nuclear arms control system and called upon world leaders to come to Moscow for a conference to ban the militarization of space. Putin's statement indicates that Russia will continue to push the US to abandon plans to deploy NMD.

"Putin: Ban Militarization of Space"

"Putin, Clinton Still Divided"

Nuclear Forces

1. Russian Rocket Forces

The Russian Security Council decided that their Strategic Missile Forces (RVSN) will remain an independent service of the Russian armed forces up to 2006. The AVN Military News Agency reported that last month's Kursk submarine disaster prompted Russian President Vladimir Putin to speed reform of the military and Russia will cut its armed forces by 400,000 men in the next three years and begin a major restructuring of its Soviet-era command structure. The Strategic Rocket Forces would be brought under the General Staff's command, ending its autonomy and downgrading its importance.

The article "Russian Strategic Missile Forces To Remain Independent Service Till 2006" is available from World News Connection

"Russia to Slash Armed Forces by 400,000 - Report"

2. US Nuclear Weapons Development

Retired UN Navy Rear Admiral Eugene Carroll, Jr. argued that the deployment of a low-yield nuclear device with earth penetration capability would be a repudiation of a US pledge at the May Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference. The low yield strategy must be blocked or our nation will affirm its adherence to a nuclear war-fighting doctrine and thereby weaken the entire global non-proliferation regime. Carroll was responding to earlier statements by Stephen Younger, chief weaponeer at the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

"A New U.S. Nuclear Weapon?"

"Nuclear Weapons Deployment (NPP Flash, V. 2, N. 29)"

3. Russian Early-Warning Satellite

sGeoffrey Forden, senior fellow at the Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, argued that the US should pay to get five already-completed Russian early-warning satellites into space because most of Russia's early-warning satellites have stopped functioning.

"World War III? Now?"

4. Israeli Nuclear Weapons

An editorial in the Saudi Arabia daily Arab News reacted to a report by the Federation of American Scientists on the size of the Israeli nuclear arsenal, and said, "What do they want so many [nuclear weapons] for? It is enough not only to wipe out every major Arab city from Morocco to the Gulf but to take in a fair bit of Africa and Asia as well."

The article "Saudi Editorial Views Israel's Nuclear Capability, Predicts "Nuclear Terrorism" is available from World News Connection

Fissile Material

1. Russia Plutonium Disposition

US Vice President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov signed an agreement to destroy a total of 68 tons of excess weapons-grade plutonium. According to US officials, the 34 tons to be destroyed by each country represents about one quarter of Russia's military plutonium stockpile and about one third of that of the United States. The Agreement establishes the goals, timelines, and conditions for ensuring that this plutonium can never again be used for weapons or any other military purposes.

"Deal Inked to Destroy 68 Tons of Plutonium"

"Vice President Al Gore Signs U.S.-Russia Plutonium Disposition Agreement"

"Full Text: 'Agreement between The United States and Russia Concerning the Management and Disposition of Plutonium Designated as no Longer Required for Defense Purposes and Related Cooperation'"

The Washington-based Nuclear Control Institute criticized an agreement by the US and Russia to recycle plutonium from nuclear weapons as fuel for electricity and said burying used plutonium would be a better option.

"D.C.-Based Disarmament Group Raps Plutonium-Recycling Deal"

2. Russian Naval Reactor Fuel.

US Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson commissioned the completion of security upgrades at two Russian Navy nuclear fuel storage sites located near Vladivostok. The upgrades were designed by the Department of Energy to provide better protection from theft or diversion of weapons-usable nuclear materials.

"DOE Press Release"

"U.S. might help Russia with spent fuel storage in Pacific"

3. Ukraine Nuclear Disposal

Residents of the Ukrainian village Sinyukhin Brod said they planned to block the transport of an SS-24 strategic missile through their village. A military spokesman told Interfax that the missile was scheduled to be transported without a nuclear warhead. The area is used for strategic missile disposal under START I and over 400 people from four local villages suffer from toxidermatosis. The Ukrainian Health Ministry assumes that missile systems placed in the region may have caused the disease.

The article "Ukrainian villagers to protest transportation of strategic missile" is available from World News Connection

South Asia Nuclear Policy

1. India-Pakistan

The Indian Foreign Ministry strongly rejected Pakistani warnings that a conflict between the two countries could lead to a full-scale nuclear war. Such "needlessly alarmist" statements by Pakistani leaders are not helpful for confidence-building, an Indian foreign office spokesman told the Press Trust of India. He said, "India categorically rejects the thesis as also the supposition on which it is based."

The article "India Rejects Pakistani Statement On Possible Nuclear War" is available from World News Connection

2. Pakistani Nuclear Strategy

Rajesh Rajagopalan with the Indian Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, argued that Pakistan's nuclear strategy originally pursued nuclear weapons to counter India's conventional military superiority, its decision to go nuclear has undermined its attempts to annex the Kashmir.

The article "Pak Unable to Annex Kashmir Despite its Nuclear Strength" is available from World News Connection

Security

1. US-Russia Arms Control

US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott said that formal negotiations on START III would have to wait until Russia agrees to enter into "formal negotiations" on missile defense systems. Russia recently ratified the START II treaty, a previous US condition for negotiating START III.

"Putin Offers Host Talks on Halting Arms in Space"

"Putin, Clinton Still Divided"

The Russian-US strategic stability group was scheduled to meet during the UN Millennium Summit. Planned discussions included, strategic stability, arms reductions, anti-ballistic missile issues, and non-proliferation regimes.

"Russian-U.S. Strategic Stability Group To Meet In New York In Early September"

The article "Russian stance on ABM said 'unchanged'" is available from

2. NATO Arms Control Policy

The British American Security Information Council published an excerpt from a larger paper by Tom McDonald and Dan Plesch designed to influence NATO's discussions of future arms control which NATO ambassadors are scheduled to review in December. The paper describes NATO's current policies regarding non-proliferation agreements and makes recommendations for the future.

"NATO's Nuclear Agenda: Recommendations for Action"

Military

1. Russian Submarine Accident

A spokesman for the Norwegian armed forces command told reporters that Norway trusted Russia's assurances that the sunken submarine Kursk did not carry nuclear weapons.

The article "Norway "Trusts" Russian Report That Sunken Sub Had No Nuclear Weapons" is available from World News Connection

While Russian military leaders have accused Western submarines of being involved in the sinking of the Kursk submarine, a poll conducted by the All-Russian Public Opinion Center found that only 14% of Russian citizens believe that the accident was the result of hostile actions on the part of NATO armed forces. Most people attributed the accident to a tragic coincidence.

The article "Russian Poll Dispels Myth of Western Role In Sub Accident" is available from World News Connection

First Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian armed forces Colonel General Valeriy Manilov said the Russian Navy continues to believe that a collision with another submarine is the most likely cause for the sinking of the Kursk submarine. He said that damage to the submarine indicated that the keel of another submarine had "'opened up' the submarine's bows and possibly damaged its solid hull." Admiral Oleg Yerofeyev, who commanded the Northern Fleet from 1992-1999, said that he does not believe the Kursk nuclear submarine collided with another vessel.

The article "Russian Military Leadership Continues To Believe In Sub Collision" is available from World News Connection

"Admiral: Missile May Have Hit Sunken Russian Sub"

A senior Russian naval officer who is a member of the naval general staff accused the U.S. military of using the Russian nuclear submarine disaster to convince the world that Russian naval weapons are insecure. The officer said the US media's statements "serves to lower the competitiveness of Russian armaments on the international market."

The article "Russian Official Attacks US Theory of Kursk Disaster" is available from World News Connection
Admiral Eduard Baltin, the former commander a Russian Northern Fleet missile-carrying submarine division, compared the sinking of the Russian submarine Kursk to the loss of the American submarine USS Scorpion in 1968. Although U.S. officials insist that the Scorpion sank due to other causes, Baltin said that it went down after a collision with a Russian submarine.

The article is available from World News Connection

The former commander in Chief of the Soviet and Russian Navy, Fleet Admiral Vladimir Chernavin, said that when he was chief U.S. nuclear submarines quite often violated Soviet/Russian territorial waters in the same area where the Kursk was carrying out its missions. In describing the incidents, Chernavin used information collected by researchers with the non-governmental organization Greenpeace.

The article is available from World News Connection

2. UK Submarine Accident

In a note to the Spanish government the British government denied that the crippled nuclear attack submarine HMS Tireless will be towed to England. The submarine has been at the Gibraltar base since May when a nuclear reactor accident forced it to end operations off Sicily.

The articles "Spain Accepts Nuclear Submarine; Submarine Repairs in Gibraltar" and "UK Tells Spain Submarine Not Being Towed From Gibraltar" are available from World News Connection

"UK Submarine Accident (NPP Flash, V. 2, N. 29)"

Mayors from southern Spain complained that they had been left in the dark by British and Spanish authorities about the status of a Royal Navy nuclear attack submarine that has been stranded in Gibraltar for three months after suffering a reactor accident while operating off Sicily in May. Over 1,500 people protested against the presence of the British nuclear submarine HMS Tireless in Gibraltar. Repairs were planned to have started on August 21 but have been delayed following local protests. The mayor of La Linea, a small town in southern Spain, says he plans to file a suit at the European courts against Britain after a nuclear submarine was brought to Gibraltar for repairs to its nuclear reactor. The mayor says fear of radioactive contamination has hurt tourism in the area.

The articles "Areas Near Gibraltar Seek Information on British Nuclear Sub Repairs," "Over 1,500 Protest Over Presence of UK Nuclear Submarine," and "Spanish Mayor To Sue Britain Over Gibraltar Nuclear Submarine" are available from World News Connection

An editorial in the Spanish daily El Pais said that the Spanish government should insist to the UK government that any risk posed by the repair of the HMS Tireless should be carried by the submarine's owners not by the inhabitants of the Gibraltar area.

The article "Daily says Spanish Government Should be Firm on Gibraltar Submarine" is available from World News Connection

China

1. PRC Changes Strategy

The Chinese armed forces held a modernized version of its "three attacks and three defenses" exercise in an effort to improve their ability to fight future high-tech wars, focusing on defense against nuclear, chemical and biological attacks. This year's exercise was modified by the Central Military Commission [CMC] in response to the high-tech revolution of modern warfare and practiced defense against stealth aircraft, cruise missiles, and armed helicopters, and defending against precision strikes, electronic interference, and reconnaissance operations.

The article "China Modifies Military Exercise In Response to High-Tech Warfare" is available from World News Connection

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