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Nuclear Weapons

1. US Loose Warheads

More than 40 years after a nuclear bomb was reportedly jettisoned from a US Air Force bomber off the US East Coast and fell into the waters off Savannah, Georgia, the Air Force has provided the first evidence that the bomb did not carry a nuclear capsule. According to earlier reports, a Mk-15 Mod 0 nuclear bomb was deliberately dropped from a B-47 bomber on February 5, 1958, following a collision with another aircraft. A new USAF report states that a "Transfer of Custody" receipt confirms no nuclear capsule was present.

"Lost Nuclear Bomb Was Not Armed, Air Force Says"

"Full Air Force Report"

Missile Defense

1. US Test Facilities

The Bush administration said it was planning a "much more robust" missile-defense test program to be expanded to sites in Alaska. The possible new test sites at Fort Greely and Kodiak Island in Alaska would be part of a vast Pacific "test bed" meant to allow for more realistic intercept tests, said US Defense Department spokesman Rear Admiral Craig Quigley. He would not state whether the Alaskan sites, once operational, would violate the 1972 Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty, which allows some testing of anti-missile technology but bars providing a "base" for such a defense in the US and the old USSR.

"U.S. Plans Expanded Missile Defense Test Facilities in Pacific"

"Full transcript"

The US Defense Department announced that a missile defense flight test will be conducted over the Pacific on July 14, 2001. The flight test, which is conducted by the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, will involve the launch of a modified Minuteman II ICBM from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. The missile will carry a mock warhead and a single decoy. An interceptor missile launched from Kwajalein Atoll will attempt to intercept the warhead. The test is the first such test since the election of President George Bush, who opposes the 1972 ABM Treaty and favors quick deployment of a missile defense system.

"Pentagon Plans Missile Defense Test On August 14"

"Ballistic Missile Defense Organization"

"Vandenberg Air Force Base Press Release"

2. US Poll

A recent poll conducted for the Council for a Livable World shows that Americans are not paying close attention to the controversial missile defense issue. According to the poll, missile defense is not a high priority, even compared with other defense concerns. Moreover, initial support for a national missile defense shield turns to opposition when voters are focused on the failure of the system to work and the fact that developing such a system would violate a treaty the US has signed.

"Poll Shows Low Interest in Missile Defense"

"Council for a Livable World"

3. Treaty Conflicts

Reports that the Bush Administration plans to abrogate the 1972 ABM Treaty "within months, not years" is the clearest signal to date that the administration is trying to resolve apparent contradictions in earlier pronouncements by various officials. The decision is likely to be warmly received by missile defense advocates and attacked by members of Congress, US allies and arms control advocates who want the US to remain within the treaty. Some observers said that the document suggests that the administration's most ardent missile defense advocates, including Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, are prevailing in the debate on the issue within senior administration ranks. A US Defense Department official said that officials would outline a missile defense plan on Thursday that would propose breaking ground at a test site in Alaska next month.

"Bush Team Sees U.S. Withdrawal From ABM Pact"

"Documents Show U.S. Expects to Violate ABM in Months"

The Russian government reacted strongly to reports of US plans to break with the ABM treaty soon. Vladimir Rushailo, the head of the Russian Security Council, warned that a unilateral US withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty would spark a new arms race. An unnamed official declared, "We will view the first cubic meter of concrete laid under the launching pad for interceptor missiles in Alaska as the United States' formal withdrawal from the ABM Treaty."

"Russia Warns on U.S. Missile Plans"

Testifying before the US Senate Armed Services Committee on the Bush Administration's 2002 budget request for Ballistic Missile Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz blamed the ABM treaty for why the US is defenseless against missile attacks. He said that the US has not yet been able to choose a system architecture because "so many promising technologies were not pursued in the past." Wolfowitz advocated expanding research and testing of capabilities that had previously been disregarded or inadequately explored. He also declared the US would no longer design its testing program to avoid breaching the ABM treaty.

"Pentagon Testifies on Ballistic Missile Defense"

"Pentagon Interview on Missile Defense"

Proliferation

1. US Nuclear Oversight

Bruce Blair of the Center for Defense Information writes in the Washington Post that US efforts to help Russia protect its vast storehouse of nuclear weapons materials from theft or sale on the black market has led to the discovery of a critical deficiency in the US system for tracking its own bomb-grade nuclear materials. Blair states that to reconstruct a reliably accurate accounting record, the US may need to inspect all of its nuclear materials, which could cost more than \$1 billion.

"Nukes: A Lesson From Russia"

2. Iran Nuclear Program

During a visit to Turkey, Israel's Minister of Defense Binyamin Ben-Eliezer told Turkish officials that Iran could have nuclear weapons in four years. "I mentioned to our friends, the Turkish leadership, that we are more than worried about the very rapid development taking place regarding nuclear weapons," Binyamin Ben-Eliezer told reporters. "As far as we know by the year 2005 they will, they might, be ready." Ben-Eliezer also said that Iranian missiles could reach any point in the Middle East. Israel is thought to already have nuclear weapons. "Israel Warns Iran Could Have Nukes In Four Years"

Military

1. US Nuclear Forces

War games held at the US National Defense University since the mid-1990s have consistently assumed that leaders of so-called "rogue" states such as North Korea, Iraq, or Iran would resort to the use of weapons of mass destruction early in a war with the US, according to a report in the Chicago Tribune. The games, which were played by mid-career military officers, also reaffirmed the value of US nuclear weapons by indicating that the threat of U.S. nuclear retaliation remains a formidable deterrence and avoiding such retaliation would be a key element of any adversary strategy.

"Exercise Prove U.S. Nuclear Force Still Key"

Security

1. US Policy in South Asia

The US wants to be friends with both India and Pakistan, Admiral Denis Blair, US Pacific Command Commander in Chief told reporters. Although Blair acknowledged that US military links with India were on "an upward trend," he emphasized, "We do not want our military relations with India to take place at the expense of Pakistan." The Bush administration is in the midst of a review of its policies toward its Cold War ally, Pakistan. Their relations are at a low ebb over prolonged military rule in Pakistan and its support for the radical Taliban rulers of neighboring Afghanistan.

"US Seeks Friendship With Both India and Pakistan"

"Full Text of Admiral Blair's Speech"

2. US Strategic Command Report

A declassified deterrence study from US Strategic Command stands in "sharp contrast" to President George Bush's vision of a new deterrence concept, according to an article in the Washington Post on July 5, 2001. The study, entitled "Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence," was release under the Freedom of Information Act to Hans M. Kristensen of the Nautilus Institute. The study investigates the nature of nuclear deterrence and the refinements to US nuclear policy that might be required for nuclear deterrence in the post-Cold War era. Missing from Bush approach, Washington Post writes, is how nuclear forces would be used if an aggressor dared attack. The Bush Administration is currently conducting a review of US nuclear policy.

"Military Study Contrasts Bush's Deterrence Vision"

"Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence"

"FAS Secrecy News, July 20, 2001"

"U.S. Strategic Command"

3. US Nuclear Program

The commander-in-chief of US Strategic Command (STRATCOM), Admiral Richard Mies, urged the US Congress to maintain a robust arsenal of modern, flexible, and highly survivable nuclear weapons and command and control facilities. In doing so, Admiral Mies made extensive use of language and conclusions from six force structure studies published by STRATCOM in the first half of the 1990s, studies that were recently described in the Nautilus Institute report Matrix of Deterrence. Admiral Mies also said that President George Bush had reaffirmed the importance of nuclear weapons in his speech at the National Defense University on May 1, 2001, and added that he was "confident" that the ongoing review of nuclear forces would preserve a triad of land-, sea-, and air-based nuclear weapons.

"STRATCOM Testimony Reaffirms Recent Deterrence Study"

"STRATCOM Force Structure Studies"

As the Bush Administration completes its nuclear posture review, the aging of those weapons and hurdles to keeping them operationally viable are emerging as key issues that will need to be addressed, writes Aviation Week & Space Technology. In the shorter term, aging deficiencies of existing warhead types are being addressed through the multi-billion dollar Stockpile Stewardship Program. In the longer term, however, some advanced and sensitive warhead types designed by the nuclear laboratories during the cold war may have to be replaced by simpler and more robust designs.

"Nuclear Weapons Showing Age"

"US Nuclear Stockpile 2001"

Arms Control

1. Proposed Russian Talks

Russia wants to establish formal talks on strategic stability and nuclear arms cuts among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, a Russian Foreign Ministry official said. The proposal was discussed with French President Jacques Chirac during a visit to Moscow.

"On the practical front in discussion with 'the five' it is planned to introduce our proposal on further radical reductions by Russia and the US to 1,500 nuclear warheads each and lower under strict controls, as provided for in the START 1 and START 2 treaties," the official said.

"Russia Wants Arms Talks Among Five Nuclear Powers"

"Russia Seeks 5-Nation Talks On Reducing Nuclear Arms"

"Russia Willing to Cut Arsenal"

2. US Nuclear Arts Cuts

A statement from the Russian Foreign Ministry took note of the US announcement to retire 50 MX (Peacekeeper) intercontinental ballistic missiles. Rather than a new reduction, the statement noted that the move was part of implementation of an older arms control agreement, and urged the US to follow a Russian proposal to reduce offensive nuclear arms to 1,500 units by 2008.

"Russian Response To Retirement of MX Missiles"

3. US Nuclear Testing Plans

The US House of Representatives has moved to block plans by the Energy Department to shorten from three years to 18 months the time it needs to be able to resume underground nuclear weapons tests. Lawmakers first want US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to complete a nuclear posture review currently underway before deciding on test site preparations.

"US Underground Test Speedup Barred"

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