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Disarmament

1. Russian Ratification of START II

The Russian Duma on Friday voted 228 to 131 with four abstentions to ratify the START II nuclear arms reduction treaty.

"Russia Lawmakers OK START II"

"Federal Law On Ratification Of START II [Unofficial translation]"

"Breakdown of Voting in Russia Duma on START-2"

US arms control expert Don Jensen says the Russian ratification has come now as a result of many factors, including a shift in the balance of Russian political forces, the recent election of Vladimir Putin as president, and pressure by the United States. Analysts saw ratification as giving Putin an opportunity to go on the offensive in his dispute with the US over the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute argues that the START II will not enter into force, and that its main purpose is to open the gates for negotiations on START.

"Russia: Many Factors Contributed To Duma Ratification Of START-II"

"Arms Vote Seen Giving Putin Ammunition"

"START II Ratification: There is More Than Meets the Eye"

2. Implementation of START II

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Saturday that Russia will not immediately scrap any nuclear ballistic missiles, but only decommission those missiles whose service life has already expired. He said "not a single missile, not a single charge will be removed from duty until the expiration of the final guaranteed time of their use." The Yomiuri newspaper reported that the Group of 7 industrialized countries will assist Russia in the dismantling of the nuclear weapons under the START II treaty. Japan's government will work in this direction as the current chairman of the Group of Eight.

"Putin Clarifies Start II Plans"

"G-7 To Assist Russia In Dismantling Of Nuclear Weapons"

3. Negotiation of START III

John Holum, senior arms adviser at the US State Department, and his Russian counterpart, Yury Kapralov, were to meet in Geneva on Monday and Tuesday to assess prospects for launching negotiations on START III.

"Russia, U.S. Set for New START Talks"

4. US Nuclear Arsenal

Despite the ratification of both START I and START II, the US Department of Energy has kept a war reserve of about 4,000 plutonium triggers or "pits" from dismantled warheads, which could be turned back into weapons within 18 months.

"Arsenal Cuts Don't Cover U.S.'s 12,000 Nuclear Triggers"

5. Nuclear Weapons De-Alerting

Frank von Hippel, former US assistant director of national security, said that the US and Russia should remove the "hair-trigger" alert of thousands of nuclear weapons scheduled to be eliminated under the START II treaty.

"Adviser: Take Warheads Off Alert"

Nonproliferation

6. NATO Nuclear Sharing

Martin Butcher, Otfried Nassauer, Tanya Padberg and Dan Plesch argue that NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements might violate the spirit, if not the letter, of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). They add, "NATO's forthcoming new military strategy might not only prolong, but even increase, the likelihood that NATO might de facto violate the NPT by actually using nuclear weapons under the Alliance's nuclear sharing arrangements.

"Questions of Command and Control: NATO, Nuclear Sharing and the NPT"

7. Western Non-Proliferation Policy

Dan Plesch argues that Western governments should review whether the strategy of holding on to their nuclear arsenals while seeking to prevent other countries from acquiring nuclear weapons is sustainable.

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

8. Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

The Japanese Study Group of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy and Non-Proliferation Policy argues that the need for stable energy supplies and to preserve the global environment are among the biggest issues the international community will face in the 21st century. They stated that the maintenance of an efficient global nuclear non-proliferation regime as well as ensuring safety are major premises for the smooth, peaceful use of nuclear energy.

"The Statement on the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy and Non-Proliferation"

Military

9. Israeli Weapons Sales to PRC

The Center for Defense Information argues that, although the US has known since 1996 that the PRC contracted to buy an airborne early warning (AEW) system from Israel, US officials never signaled that they wanted to block the sale until earlier this month.

"Congress Forces Israel's Hand on AWACs Sale to China: The Case Against Advanced Weapon Sales"

10. NATO Intervention

Hugh Beach, Alain Pellet, and Gwyn Prins look at issues of secession, legitimacy, and just war theory as they relate to Kosovo; tensions between intervention and sovereignty from the perspective of international law; and the international politics of intervention in general, and the between western concepts of intervention and those in Russia, the PRC, and much of the developing world.

"Secessions, interventions and just war theory: the case of Kosovo"

11. NATO Expansion

Stratford notes rumors that the US has offered to donate several F-16 fighters to Croatia, arguing that such a deal would help pave the way for a rapid Croatian integration into NATO. It also argues that the Georgian Defense Ministry's proposal to cut its army almost in half by the end of 2001 is primarily intended to attract Western aid.

"Croatia Preps for NATO: Cheap Planes in the Works"

"Georgian Troops Cuts Possible NATO Lure"

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Nautilus Institute

2342 Shattuck Ave. #300, Berkeley, CA 94704 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org