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Nuclear Weapons

1. Kursk Nuclear Weapons

The Bellona Foundation and the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at MIIS released separate statements which stated that there is no reason to believe rumors that the Russian submarine Kursk carried nuclear weapons when it sank in the Barents Sea last August, as put out by Norwegian television station "TV2." Bellona states that Russian Duma representative Gregory Tomchin, who is also a member of the committee investigating the Kursk accident, said that he never meant to state that there were nuclear warheads on-board, but only that Russian submarines do carry nuclear weapons occasionally.

"Report that Kursk Carried Nuclear Weapons Unlikely"

"Duma source denies nuclear warhead rumours"

2. Scientific Report

Scientists at Rutgers University in New Jersey used analytical techniques and computer calculations to predict changes in the structure of the solid states of plutonium from a dense, unstable phase to a safer state, a finding that could lead to safer handling and storage of nuclear weapons.

"Scientists Unravel Clues to Behavior of Plutonium Research may help safety of storing nuclear weapons"

"New Method to Predict Plutonium Stability"

Security

1. US Nuclear Posture Review

Robert Kerrey and William D. Hartung write in the current issue of Arms Control Today that while ordering a full review of the US nuclear weapons posture is a step in the right direction, the Bush administration needs to challenge Cold War-era assumptions in order to effect significant nuclear cuts. They review the previous decade of arms control and nuclear posture policy, as well as evaluate likely Bush administration policies. They argue that the political consensus needed to support real changes in US policy will not be achieved without a well-informed national debate about what purpose nuclear weapons should serve in the national security strategy, a debate necessarily incorporating the views of members of Congress, non-governmental analysts, and experts who have been involved in the development of U.S. nuclear weapons and nuclear policy in past administrations. They argue that the basic challenge for the Bush administration will be deciding whether it wants to take a unilateralist approach that relies on an ambitious missile defense program and the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons, or a more cooperative stance in which the US promotes reductions in global nuclear stockpiles by expanding existing arms control agreements.

"Toward a New Nuclear Posture: Challenges for the Bush Administration"

2. US Budget: Nuclear Increases

The Associate Press released a brief analysis of US President George Bush's proposed budget for fiscal 2002, and reports that the proposed US Defense Department budget includes a \$20 billion increase between 2002 and 2006 for weapons systems research and development. The Energy Department's spending for maintaining the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile would increase to \$5.3 billion, a boost of 5 percent.

"How Bush Budget Allocates Spending"

The Sustainable Energy Coalition issued a press release which states that US President George W. Bush's proposed 2002 budget turns away from sustainable energy research. The press release also states that the budget contains an increase of over \$1.5 billion for the design and development of new nuclear weapons.

"Sustainable Energy Coalition: Bush Budget Plan Turns Its Back On A Sensible Energy Policy"

Proliferation

1. Russian Chemical Weapons Stockpile

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said during a visit to The Hague stated that Russia would have "serious difficulties" in meeting deadlines set by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which require it to get rid of 20 percent of its stockpile by April 2002. He said Russia needs international help to cover the \$8-\$10 billion cost of meeting the deadline for destroying its chemical weapons stockpile.

"Russia Pleads for Aid to Scrap Chemical Weapons"

2. US Budget: Nonproliferation Cuts

The Associate Press released a brief analysis of US President Bush's proposed budget for fiscal 2002, and reports that the Energy Department's spending for nonproliferation programs, including those aimed at helping Russia stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, will drop by \$100 million from \$874 million in the current year.

"How Bush Budget Allocates Spending"

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace released a news analysis which argues that the Bush administration's cuts to the US Energy Department's nonproliferation programs could endanger the US effort to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

"Programs Targeting Proliferation Face Cuts"

Michael McFaul writes in the New York Times that the Bush administration has promised a full review of US policy towards Russia, based more on a realist perspective of Russia's international behavior than its domestic reforms. McFaul questions how the Bush administration can move forward with a decision to cut nonproliferation programs in Russia before such a review is completed, arguing that the proposal is bad policy and worse as symbolism. McFaul argues that the administration's proposal comes despite the wide bipartisan support such programs have in the US and the indication that Russian President Vladimir Putin might be prepared to go even further to restructure the Russian nuclear complex. He concludes by arguing that the Bush administration should be prepared to maintain this budget at a time when opportunities for cooperation with Russia are decreasing and when it appears willing to spend massively on missile defense.

"Guarding Russia's Nukes"

"A Step Backward on Nuclear Cooperation"

Arms Control

1. US-Russian Treaty Completion

Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency reported that Russia and the US have agreed to hold events on May 31 to mark the completion of inspections under the treaty on the abolition of medium- and short-range missiles. The first deputy chief of the Russian center for the reduction of nuclear risk, Major-General Sergey Burutin, said the ceremonies marking an end to a class of nuclear missiles would be attended by the participants in the 13-year inspections and by delegates of Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

"Inspections Under Russia-U.S. Missile Treaty Near Completion"

Missile Defense

1. US Proposed MD System

Wade Boese writes in the current issue of Arms Control Today that US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, appeared to be making the case for a layered defense consisting of multiple types of anti-ballistic missile systems, including sea-based systems. Rumsfeld, who has stated that he does not see the 1972 ABM Treaty as "having a central role in strategic stability," also said, "We've asked our people to look at missile defense unconstrained by the [ABM] Treaty." Rumsfeld has reaffirmed Bush's campaign pledge that whatever missile defense system is pursued, the objective will be to protect all 50 US states, deployed US troops, and US allies. However, Rumsfeld has directed the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO) to "press on" with system testing and research on the Clinton NMD system.

"Top Pentagon Officials Make Case for Layered Missile Defense"

The Center for Defense Information released updates to their missile defense reports on April 5, 2001. One states that a report in Defense Week citing newly released US Defense Department figures shows that the total development, deployment, and maintenance costs for all US ballistic missile defense programs will exceed \$115 billion. This tally includes not just NMD but also the US Navy's Theater Wide system, the US Army's THAAD, and the SBIRS-Low satellite constellation. A second update reports that Jane's Defence Weekly reported that the US Navy proposed deploying a near-term boost-phase missile defense system in Asia based on Arleigh Burke-class Aegis guided missile destroyers, which the Navy believes would be capable in 18 months of shooting down a DPRK Taepo-dong missile during the boost phase. A boost-phase system raises command issues as the commander in the field would have to be authorized in advance to fire since a boost-phase intercept requires a response within seconds of launch detection. The CDI also reported that the US Army's Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3) missile has successfully engaged and destroyed two simultaneously launched targets during a March 31 test. This was the eighth successful test of the system, which is scheduled to enter full production in 2002.

"The Costs of Ballistic Missile Defense (Update)"

"Technological Challenges in National Missile Defense"

2. International Comments on US MD

In separate speeches before the UN Disarmament Commission, Russia, the PRC and the DPRK warned that the US missile defense system would threaten international security, undermine the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and trigger a new arms race. DPRK UN Ambassador Li Hyong Chol accused the US of "unjustifiably" branding the country "a rogue state" and making claims about "the nonexistent 'missile threat' from us" in order to justify building the missile system. He warned that the DPRK would have no choice but to take countermeasures if the US persists, stating, "Even if this entails an arms race between North Korea and the U.S. and all other agreements are scrapped, we will have little to lose." PRC Ambassador Hu Xiaodi said a US missile defense shield "will severely hinder the international arms control and disarmament process and even trigger off a new round of (the) arms race."

"U.S. Missile Defense Plans Attacked"

"U.S. Missile Defense Plans Attacked"

3. Russian MD Proposal

An Interfax interview with a "high-ranking official from the Russian General Staff" revealed that Russian plans for a European anti-missile system could include an international rapid-reaction force and a center to watch for rocket attacks. The official said that Russia and European countries could jointly develop, build and deploy non-strategic anti-ballistic missile systems with international military teams running them.

"Russia Sees Rapid Anti-Missile Force --Interfax"

Max M. Kampelman, chairman of the Georgetown University Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, and Frederick Seitz, president emeritus of Rockefeller University, write in the Washington Post that Russian President Vladimir Putin has responded to the US missile defense proposals by calling for a limited, Europe-wide missile defense program, which the US ought to welcome. They argue that the US and its NATO allies should form an international missile consortium, regardless of whether Russia proves to be serious about its proposals, in order to create a global missile defense system within the decade, using both cutting-edge scientific research and farsighted diplomacy. Further, protocols should be established concerning all rocket launches worldwide once the system is in place, whether or not the launching nation is a consortium member.

"Missile Defense: A Global Approach"

4. Commentary on US MD

Spurgeon M. Keeny argues in the April edition of Arms Control Today that the decision by the administration of US President George Bush to not pursue the Clinton administration's deal to curb the DPRK missile threat is so irrationally contrary to US security interests that it is perceived internationally as designed to preserve the DPRK ballistic missile threat as the rationale for early deployment of a national missile defense. Keeny states that the decision was apparently made without consultation with the ROK or Japan, and that the window of opportunity on curbing the missile threat may close because the DPRK had declared that its self-imposed moratorium would last only as long as negotiations continued. He also argues that there should be no hold-up over verification concerns because the US has the technical capacity to monitor the events needed to test ballistic missile. Keeny concludes by arguing that curbing the DPRK's missile program would help the US most during the next decade before missile defense can be effectively deployed.

"Preserving the North Korean Threat"

A Council for a Livable World Issue Brief reviewed the statements of US Senator Joseph Biden and the former head of Testing and Evaluation for the US Defense Department, Philip E. Coyle at an April 4 briefing hosted by the Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers and the Center for Defense Information (CDI). Biden underscored the fact that while NMD deployment is a long way off and the systems remain unproven, the international security costs are high and may be felt soon. He argued against using NMD as a substitute for arms control and diplomacy. Phil Coyle, a senior fellow CDI, summarized the technological delays facing the US missile defense programs. "Basically," Coyle said, "area defense short-range systems are farther along than the theater systems... And the theater systems are farther along than NMD, boost-phase, mid-course, or otherwise."

"Briefing Transcript"

"No Inevitability with National Missile Defense"

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