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Nuclear Weapons

1. Israel Nuclear Program

Avner Cohen, author of "Israel and the Bomb" and currently a Senior Researcher at the National Security Archive at George Washington University, returns soon to Israel for the first time since his book's publication in 1998. The book includes no technical or operational details about Israel's nuclear arsenal, but is a history of Israel's nuclear program, based on declassified public documents and Cohen's interviews with key players in the effort. The book was banned in Israel and Cohen is returning in order to force public debate about Israel's nuclear program.

"A Challenge To Israel's Nuclear Blind Spot"

2. DPRK Missile Program

A day after it abruptly canceled Cabinet-level talks with the ROK, the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency released a statement highly critical of the US for its hard-line stance on resuming talks with the DPRK designed to halt its missile program. Joseph Nye, a Korea expert and dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, said after a recent conversation on DPRK policy with a US administration official, "the impression I got was that they were tightening the policy somewhat, but not reversing it."

"North Korea Denounces Bush Stance"

Proliferation

1. CIA Nonproliferation Center

Director of the US Central Intelligence Agency, George J. Tenet, created the Weapons Intelligence, Nonproliferation and Arms Control Center, to be directed by Alan Foley, current head of the CIA's Arms Control Intelligence Staff. The center will bring together 500 analysts, scientists and support personnel from three existing CIA analytic staffs to focus on nonproliferation and arms control issues.

"CIA Is Stepping Up Attempts To Monitor Spread of Weapons"

2. Russia Arm Sales to Iran

Russian President Vladimir V. Putin formally agreed to resume sales of conventional arms to Iran after a hiatus of more than five years. At a meeting with Iranian President Muhammad Khatami, Putin also reiterated Russia's intention to help Iran complete a long-stalled nuclear power plant that some US experts contend could advance Iran's nuclear weapons program. US State Department spokesman Richard A. Boucher said, "We are particularly concerned about sales of advanced conventional weapons or sensitive technologies, things like nuclear technology," but the immediate effect on US-Russian relations is unclear because the scope of cooperation with Iran remains unclear. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov said that Iran hopes to buy one of Russia's most advanced air-defense systems, the S-300 antimissile complex, which is said to track and destroy as many as six low-flying cruise missiles or aircraft at a time.

"Putin to Sell Arms and Nuclear Help to Iran"

"Russia, Iran Renew Alliance Meant to Boost Arms Trade"

"Iran and Russia Sign Oil and Weapons Pact"

US Secretary of State Colin Powell used the occasion of the visit to the US by Sergei B. Ivanov, who heads Russian President Vladimir V. Putin's security council, to criticize Russia. Powell told Ivanov that Russia should not be "investing in weapons sales in countries such as Iran which have no future." Ivanov was officially hosted by US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, who has said she will not concentrate on the relationship with Russia as much as the Clinton administration had. Her staff also went out of its way to note that Rice had met with her counterparts from Britain, France and Germany before inviting Ivanov to the US.

"U.S. Mutes Criticism of Russia's Plans for Arms Sales to Iran"

Missile Defense

1. Rumsfeld Statement on Missile Defense

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, speaking with NATO Secretary-General George Robertson at a March 8 joint press conference, said tagging the missile defense effort as either theater or national is "unuseful." He said, "What's 'national' depends on where you live, and what's 'theater' depends on where you live."

"It's Not 'National' or 'Theater,' It's Just Missile Defense"

"Joint Media Availability - Secretary Rumsfeld and Secretary General Robertson"

2. PRC Statements

Sha Zukang, director of the PRC's Arms Control and Disarmament Department, said the US national missile-defense plan was a US attempt "to seek its own absolute security" and that it would destabilize the region. However, Sha also said that the PRC was willing to discuss the proposed antimissile shields with the US in order to "narrow our differences." While Sha said, "China is not opposed to [theater missile defense] . . . to protect troops and military bases," he also said that the PRC would view with alarm any US attempts to transfer missile defense technology to Taiwan. Such technology would include the Aegis radar system mounted on Arleigh Burke-class destroyers, which the Bush administration is considering selling to Taiwan and will make a decision upon next month. The PRC Deputy Prime Minister Qian Qichen is due to visit the US to meet President Bush and PRC experts said the softer tone may be an attempt to lay the groundwork for that meeting and appears to be part of a broader effort to build trust with the new administration. Bates Gill, a PRC military specialist at the Brookings Institution, said, "This statement appears to mark a shift from full-on opposition to a willingness to engage in a more open dialogue about the U.S.-China strategic nuclear relationship."

"China Willing to Talk About Missile Defenses"

"Beijing Eases Stand On Missile Defense"

3. PRC-US Relations

An editorial in the New York Times by Trevor Corson, managing editor of Transition at Harvard University, argues that the only major power threatened by the US and Russian missile defense proposals is the PRC, and the chief effect of Russia's offer of cooperation would be to radically destabilize global security dynamics by backing the PRC into a corner. Corson states that because the PRC will have no nuclear deterrent to discourage US intervention in a conflict over Taiwan, it is likely to interpret a US missile defense as a revival of the US-Taiwan military alliance.

"Backing Beijing Into a Corner "

4. Russian Proposed MD

Nikolai Sokov writes in a report for the Center for Nonproliferation Studies on the new Russian proposal for a European Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system. Sokov argues that the indifferent response on the part of the West is a result of the fact that Russians have not yet learned to "sell" new initiatives, but that the vagueness of the Russian offer provides an opportunity for NATO to fill the gaps and shape Russian policy in ways compatible with NATO's own interests and security needs. Sokov interprets the most recent Russian statements as suggesting that regardless of whether there is a missile threat and what kind of system is chosen for deployment, Russian opposition might weaken or even evaporate if it's defense contractors are able to get in on the action. Sokov states that the first stage of the EuroBMD will be devoted to exhaustive consultations among all interested countries to identify whether there is a threat and how to meet those specific threats, through, because of its relationship with countries such as Iran, it would be much more convenient for Russia to pursue a "neutral" defense system against any future threat irrespective of its origin. Sokov argues that Russia's vagueness about the technical capabilities of such a missile defense system is to avoid identifying specific threats. Sokov concludes by arguing that the Russian proposal has created an opportunity to pursue shared interests rather than useless antagonism.

"RUSSIAN MISSILE DEFENSE FOR EUROPE: The February 20 Proposal Is More Serious Than It Seems"

[\(return to top\)](#)

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