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Nuclear Weapons

1. Nuclear Testing

The BBC reports that the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (Arpansa) has confirmed that the bodies of thousands of Australian children and adults were posthumously used in scientific nuclear tests without parental consent, with their autopsy samples used for studies in the US, Great Britain and Australia. John Loy, the Agency's chief executive, says the experiments were to gauge the effects of the fall out from nuclear weapons. Loy said, "I have to emphasis that this programme wasn't done secretly, it was reported on, it was reported in the scientific literature, it was reported in public reports. It wasn't a secret but I think in the standards of the time I don't think the idea of consent was even thought of."

"Australia tested nukes on bodies"

Security

1. US-DPRK Missile Talks

A US State Department official said the DPRK has agreed to talks in New York between Li Hyong-chol, the DPRK representative to the United Nations, and US special envoy, Jack Pritchard. US officials have not said to what extent the meeting would be substantive or merely procedural. ROK Foreign Minister Han Seung-soo, visiting the US this week, welcomed the US decision to seek to restart the talks with a comprehensive agenda. He said, "What is important is that the U.S. has completed the policy review toward North Korea and decided to resume dialogue with the North with a comprehensive approach. So we really welcome the U.S. overture." James Kelly, assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs, said that Bush administration officials "want to see an end to the North's missile program and its proliferation activity." He added, "We also want to explore ways of reducing tension on the Korean peninsula caused by confrontation of conventional forces." A task force organized by the Council on Foreign Relations said the US should work with the ROK and Japan, let the ROK take the lead in engaging the DPRK, involve top-level DPRK leaders who are the only ones able to make important decisions.

"American Talks With North Korea to Resume"

"North Korea, U.S. to Hold Talks Today On Missiles"

2. US-Russia Joint Early Warning Center

Peter Baker reports in the Washington Post that despite the attention given to the announcement of a joint US-Russia early warning center in 1998 and again in 2000, planning for the center has not proceeded. In addition to losing momentum under the Bush administration's review of US foreign policy, Russian officials said their law required the US to pay taxes on the equipment brought into the country and to assume liability for construction, but the US refuses on the basis that such a precedent would affect other aid programs. Baker argues that this should be a lesson for US President George Bush in discussing with Russia ways to cooperate in building a ballistic missile shield. Pavel Podvig, a researcher at the Center for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies in Moscow, said, "This shows very clearly that if it's just a political ploy to make everybody look better, then nobody will move it forward. We are no longer in that mode where anything cooperative is such a great idea that all the bureaucracies would just clear away." Baker states that the stalemate over the early warning center leaves unaddressed Russia's huge blind spots in detecting missile launches, the problem with which the center was supposed to cope.

"Nuclear 'Milestone' Divides U.S., Russia"

3. US Strategic Framework

Sam Nunn, a former Democratic senator from Georgia and currently co-chairman of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, writes in the Washington Post that the clear and present danger facing the US is not from DPRK missiles that could hit the US in a few years, but is from Russian missiles that could be accidentally launched and from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and materials in Russia and the former USSR that could fall into the hands of terrorist groups. Nunn argues that US President Bush will spend his meetings with European and Russian leaders to prepare for the future threat of ballistic missiles while neglecting the immediate threats facing the US. Nunn argues that changes to the US force posture, like US nonproliferation efforts, will do more to increase US security than building missile defense. Nunn concludes with the argument that, "A limited missile defense has a place in a comprehensive, integrated plan of nuclear defense, but it should be seen for what it is -- a last line of defense," after "diplomacy, intelligence and cooperation among nations."

"When Bush Meets Putin"

James Dao writes in the New York Times that US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld recently emerged from a self-imposed study period to travel to Europe for meetings with leaders there and began sketching the broad outlines of a "strategic framework" with Russia that might replace the ABM treaty, including the need to deploy missile defenses. Rumsfeld said that when enemies of the US are less powerful and less obvious but potentially more numerous, treaties are too formal, too restrictive and take too long to negotiate to address fast-changing threats.

"Rumsfeld Calls on Europe to Rethink Arms Control"

Missile Defense

1. US Perspectives on Missile Defense

The Los Angeles Times reports that the Council on Foreign Relations released a survey that showed 51% of Americans in favor of an anti-missile shield and 38% against. The results were somewhat contradictory on the issue, though. Researchers said that although building a system could force abandonment of arms-control treaties, the poll showed that 54% of Americans believe that arms control treaties are the best protection against a missile attack while 34% thought an anti-missile system would be better protection. None of five arguments against building a shield was viewed by a majority as a convincing reason to oppose its creation. The arguments against missile defense presented were: it would be too costly; it could trigger an arms race; the technology isn't available; building it could damage relations with China and Russia; and that no real threat exists. While people who described themselves as conservatives tended to favor missile defense, even "liberals" were fairly evenly split.

"Majority in U.S. Backs Missile Shield, Poll Finds"

Seven Democrats from the US House of Representatives joined several anti-missile defense activist groups at a news conference to oppose Bush's proposal as ineffective, too expensive and a threat to national security. While lawmakers often mute their criticisms of a president when he is abroad, they hoped to influence the US allies Bush is trying to convince to support the anti-missile system development.

"Democrats Criticize Missile Defense"

2. European Statements

BASIC released a statement saying that several high-profile British parliamentarians will join disarmament groups in expressing their opposition to the proposed US missile defense plan on the occasion of US President George Bush's visit to Europe.

"Bush's Arrival in Europe Met by Global Statement of Opposition to US Missile Defence"

Humphrey Hawksley reports for the BBC that residents in Greenland are opposed to the placement of missile defense radars by the US in their territory. Danish Foreign Minister Mogens Lykketoft said, "Of course, this is in principle a formality and decision of the government of Denmark, but in reality it will have to include a consensus between Denmark and the people of Greenland." Hawksley reports that Danes in Greenland are still upset that a promise to not store nuclear weapons there in the 1950s was broken, a fact learned only in the 1990s.

"Arctic battleground for US missile plan"

3. US Consultations in Europe

In an interview with Belgian television on the eve of his inaugural visit to Europe, US President George Bush said the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty blocked testing and development of the elements of a multi-layered anti-missile shield and therefore no longer made sense. Bush said, "The current treaty prevents us from doing even more tests to determine what's effective and that's what we really want to know." He said that the threats the US needed to consult with Russia and US allies on included: "threats of terrorism, threats of weapons of mass destruction, threats that can interrupt our ability to communicate with each other, biological threats."

"Bush: Allies Have Say on Missile Shield Development"

US President George Bush spent the first day of his European visit meeting with Spanish officials. During a press conference with Spanish Prime Minister, Bush responded to questions regarding the proposed US deployment of missile defense, stating, "The technology of intercept-on-launch is a technology that we must more fully explore in order to make sure that we have the defensive capabilities necessary to prevent what I call blackmail. So part of the reason we're having the dialogue in the first place is to enable us to explore all our options... The ABM Treaty is a relic of the past. It prevents freedom-loving people from exploring the future, and that's why we've got to lay it aside, and that's why we've got to have the framework, the discussions necessary to explain to our friends and allies, as well as Russia, that our intent is to make the world more peaceful, not more dangerous."

"In Bush's Words: ABM 'Prevents a Full Exploration of Possibility'"

"Criticism Greets Bush As Europe Trip Begins"

"Pushing His Missile Plan in Spain, Bush Calls Arms Treaty a 'Relic'"

US President George Bush has been positive regarding NATO member countries' reactions to US missile defense plans. However, French President Jacques Chirac said the 1972 ABM Treaty is a "pillar" of global security and that abandoning it for missile defense would be "a fantastic incentive to proliferate." German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said, "We have a lot of issues to clarify and must and will continue these discussions intensively within the alliance." He also raised questions about the technical feasibility of missile defense.

"Bush Runs Into Skepticism at NATO Over Missile Shield"

4. Japanese Statements

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi did not rule out opposing US plans for a missile defense shield during a question time in Parliament, a departure from the government's position of complete neutrality. He said, "We have to carefully consider this issue, which has enormous influence on global security." Koizumi also said that a global arms race could not be ruled out as a possible outcome of missile defense deployment."

"Japan PM May Oppose Missile Defense"

Military

1. US Bomber Forces

Long-range bombers have "a very bright future" and will remain an important player in US military operations well into the 21st century, said 8th Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. Tom Keck who oversees the U.S. Air Force's bomber force. He added that ongoing US defense studies all point to a growing need for bombers like the B-1, B-2, and B-52 to strike targets around the world in a matter of hours.

"Air Force Commander Sees Bright Future for Bombers"

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