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Nuclear Weapons

1. Tactical Nuclear Weapons

A senior US State Department official said that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright raised with Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov the issue of the reported movement of nuclear weapons into Kaliningrad, but said, "She didn't get a detailed response." The US had earlier reported "some movement of tactical nuclear weapons into Kaliningrad", which the Russian Defense Ministry has denied.

"U.S. Raises Kaliningrad Nuclear Reports With Russia"

Nikolai Sokov, of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute, discusses the role of tactical nuclear weapons for Russia in light of the recent reports that Russia is storing such weapons in Kaliningrad. Sokov states that the lesson Russia learned from the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia was that Russia would need to plan for the limited use of nuclear weapons to increase the cost of a conventional attack against Russia by a highly superior opponent. In the summer of 1999, Russia simulated an attack against Kaliningrad in which its forces lasted only three days, and in which tactical nuclear weapons were used to demonstrate that Russia was not afraid of escalation. However, most training in this manner, Sokov states, have used air-launched nuclear weapons, and not ground launched, and therefore other scenarios for the use of tactical nuclear weapons are more plausible. Sokov reviews a number of these alternative scenarios and states the need to negotiate a formal and verifiable international regime to cover tactical nuclear weapons.

"The 'Tactical Nuclear Weapons Scare' of 2001"

2. Depleted Uranium (DU) Munitions

Jane's online reported on the current dispute over the use of depleted uranium (DU) munitions by NATO during operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. The British Ministry of Defense reconsidered an earlier position and began a voluntary program to screen personnel that may have been exposed to the munitions because of the health risks associated with DU. Most European countries have screening programs for their veterans. Italy and Germany have called for a moratorium on the use of DU munitions, though they serve a clear military use and this controversy may expose NATO members to the need to clean up sites in the Balkans and Persian Gulf where they were used. The French Defense Ministry stated that tests conducted on five soldiers who served in the Balkans and now have cancer, did not show exposure to depleted uranium. The report creates some doubt as to recent claims that depleted uranium munitions were responsible for the adverse health of veterans of Balkan operations.

"NATO forces react to depleted uranium backlash"

"Officials Discount Uranium Concerns"

US Defense Department spokesman Kenneth Bacon assured reporters that "there's absolutely no scientific linkage, based on all the studies we've done, there's no scientific linkage between exposure to depleted uranium and leukemia." Even so, Bacon added that the Defense Department "obviously put out instructions about avoiding depleted uranium dust and in cases where somebody would go into a tank carcass shortly after a depleted uranium round had knocked it out."

"Pentagon Comments on Depleted Uranium"

"Full Briefing (US Defense Department)"

Jane's Defense Weekly also released a report by Otto G. Raabe, with the University of California at Irvine's Institute of Toxicology & Environmental Health, on the toxicity of depleted uranium. The report states that DU munitions are only very weakly radioactive, that there is no known or expected leukemia risk associated with small amounts of U-238, and that kidney damage is dosage dependent and somewhat reversible, though lead bullets are probably more dangerous than DU. Jane's technical writer Rupert Pengelley discussed DU munitions' health effects and their utility in penetrating tank armor. He states that DU munitions could be replaced by tungsten munitions, but that they require a higher velocity firing than possible with currently tank guns.

"A short review of depleted uranium toxicity"

"The DU debate: what are the risks?"

3. US Nuclear Program

Leigh Strobe reports in the Philadelphia Inquirer that, according to the US Congress General Accounting Office, maintenance of the US nuclear forces is two years behind schedule and \$300 million over budget. The House appropriations committee has expressed concern over whether the \$4.5 billion budget is adequate to oversee refurbishing of the arsenal, much of whose infrastructure was built in the 1940s and 1950s.

"Problems vex nuclear program"

US President-elect George W. Bush received his briefing from the Defense Department on the US nuclear war plan and on the briefcase, which contains nuclear launch authorization codes and follows the President everywhere. Bush was accompanied by Vice President-elect Dick Cheney, Secretary of State-designate Colin Powell and Secretary of Defense-designate Donald Rumsfeld, all three of whom are familiar with nuclear war planning. Bush also received a briefing on scenarios for conventional warfare around Korea and the Persian Gulf.

"PENTAGON BRIEFING LETS BUSH SEE NUCLEAR WAR'S GRIMNESS"

4. US Policy on PRC Nuclear Program

The National Security Archive at George Washington University released a report and US government documents collected by William Burr and Jeffrey Richelson which showed that President Kennedy considered bombing strikes and covert paramilitary operations to destroy the PRC's nuclear weapons program in the early 1960s. Kennedy and Johnson considered supplying nuclear weapons to India to counter the PRC's nuclear weapons program, or directly attacking the PRC's nuclear weapons capabilities by bombing their facilities or killing their experts. The documents show that these measures were rejected as too risky, and ultimately decided upon using diplomatic pressure. Burr and Richelson published their findings in the Winter 2000/2001 issue of International Security.

"Whether To 'Strangle the Baby in the Cradle': The U.S. and the Chinese Nuclear Program, 1960-64"

"Kennedy, Johnson weighed plan to attack China's nuclear facilities"

5. Indian Missile Launch

The Associate Press reported that India test fired its Agni-2 intermediate range missile. The mobile-launched missile, which has a range of 1,375 miles and is capable of carrying a nuclear payload of up to one ton, can hit any location in Pakistan. The article states that India is under pressure to not deploy the Agni-2 in order to avoid precipitating a further arms race with Pakistan. India has fought three wars with Pakistan since 1947, and also has border conflicts with the PRC.

"Report: India Tests Missile"

6. Latvia Ban

The Latvian government reaffirmed its ban on nuclear warships this week. Latvia first banned nuclear-powered vessels and ships carrying nuclear weapons or cargo in 1992 as part of a regional initiative to keep the Baltic Sea region nuclear free. "The Baltic Sea is a nuclear-free zone and we're trying to protect our environment, that's all," said Svetlana Areslanova, a legal specialist with Latvia's Ministry of Defense. Latvia has hopes to join NATO, but the nuclear ban will likely irritate the US and UK. Both countries continue to maintain a neither confirm nor deny policy although nuclear weapons were removed from their warships years ago, so Latvia is unlikely to attempt to enforce the ban.

"Latvia reaffirms ban on nuclear vessels"

Arms Control

1. Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

Arms Control Today published the full text of John Shalikashvili's report to President Bill Clinton. Shalikashvili, former Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, was tasked by Clinton to review the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the 1999 rejection of the treaty by the US Senate. His report favored ratification of the treaty without amendment and recommended programs to accommodate critics of the treaty. The NPP Weekly Flash covered the issue in issue number V.3 #3, available through the link below.

"Findings and Recommendations Concerning the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty"
"Text Only"

"Shalikashvili Report on CTBT (NPP Weekly Flash, Vol. 3 #2)"

"Responses to Shalikashvili Report (NPP Weekly Flash, Vol. 3 #2)"

2. US-Russia Launch Notification Deal

Philipp C. Bleek, reports in the current issue of Arms Control Today on the US-Russian "Memorandum of Understanding on Missile Launch Notifications," an agreement that creates a Joint Data Exchange Center in Moscow to jointly monitor missile and space launch data, establishes an obligation for advance notice of launches with exceptions for national security reasons and of satellites forced from their orbit. Bleek states that a primary reason for the agreement is to prevent the accidental launch of Russian nuclear weapons, which depend upon a deteriorating national monitoring system.

"U.S., Russia Sign Missile- and Space-Launch Notification Deal"

Missile Defense

1. US National Missile Defense (NMD)

Spurgeon Keeny, writing in the current issue of Arms Control Today, discusses the future environment for arms control under President-elect George W. Bush. Keeny states that according to his campaign promises, Bush will likely withdraw from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, unless Russia agrees to amend it, and he opposes US ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. He argues that Bush's vision for National Missile Defense (NMD) is a threat to the international, as well as domestic bilateral, consensus that has grown around the international arms control regime. Keeny states that, in abandoning existing regimes in order to remove constraints upon US behavior, the Bush administration would cause Russia and the PRC to choose to both strengthen their individual nuclear and conventional forces, and their bilateral relations with each other. Finally, he argues that NMD will be expensive and harm US international leadership.

"Campaign Promises vs. Real World Responsibilities"

An editorial in the Boston Globe argues that President-elect George W. Bush would do best to follow the caution of Secretary of State-designate Colin Powell, rather than the enthusiasm of Defense Secretary-designate Donald Rumsfeld, in formulating his approach to pursuing a National Missile Defense (NMD) system. NMD, the editorial argues, suffers from several technical hurdles that impede its deployment as an effective system, and will also be quite expensive. The editorial concludes by proposing that Bush appoint a commission of independent scientists to evaluate NMD.

"An indefensible plan"

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported that US Defense Secretary-designate Donald H. Rumsfeld, at his Senate confirmation hearing, said that it is important for the US to develop as soon as possible an effective missile defense program to protect the US and its allies. Rumsfeld did not describe the missile defense systems that he would support, but stated that he felt that it could be deployed even with technical problems. The article also reported that Senate Democrats differ with Rumsfeld over his position on building missile defense, resuming nuclear testing, and withdrawing from the 1972 ABM Treaty.

"At confirmation, Rumsfeld promotes missile defense"

2. NMD Debate in UK

The London Daily Telegraph reported that William Hague, a leader of the incoming UK Tory government, would support using the Fylingdales base for the US National Missile Defense (NMD) system. The Telegraph states that Hague's position shows that a split is growing within the UK government and the Labor Party over UK participation in the US NMD system, as Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain and Labor MP George Galloway have both said that participation would put Britain in harm's way. Hague is not expected to favor committing billions of UK pounds to the project, but would like Britain to fully cooperate with the US. The article demonstrates the delicate balance the British government must strike to maintain the US-UK relationship in spite of issues such as NMD and the proposed EU Rapid Reaction Force.

"We'll back Star Wars, says Hague"

3. Patriot Antimissile System

US Secretary of Defense William Cohen stated that the Patriot antimissile system failed to work as expected during the Gulf War. Cohen's statement contradicts claims by the US Army and may impact future decisions over National Missile Defense (NMD). Joseph Cirincione, the director of the Non-Proliferation Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said Cohen was simply stating what US and Israeli scientists have long concluded. US Army statements about the Patriot's effectiveness were downgraded from 100% to 60%, though other analysts have said that because the Patriot is so easily confused by countermeasures, the effectiveness rate may only be 9%.

"The Patriot Gulf missile 'didn't work'"

Proliferation

1. Cooperative Threat Reduction Program

Kenneth N. Luongo, writing in the current issue of Arms Control Today, discusses recent policy decisions that could upset the Nunn-Lugar threat reduction program, which seeks to contain the threat of nuclear proliferation from Russia. A further deterioration of US-Russian relations, which Luongo states began with disagreement over Yugoslavia and threaten to continue over Russian arms sales to Iran and US threats to withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty and develop National Missile Defense (NMD), would upset this cooperative security program. Luongo argues that it is especially NMD which would completely redefine the US strategic relationship with Russia, with Russia having already threatened to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Russian President Vladimir Putin has supported programs that he feels to be financially prudent, such as shrinking the Russian nuclear forces and permitting the US purchase of excess Russian nuclear materials, but has not voiced a philosophical concern for non-proliferation efforts themselves. Luongo also discusses the future possible treatment of Russia by the incoming Bush administration, which he argues will deal with Russia from a greater distance and less as a real strategic partner, especially as the US has become less flexible in its approach to monitoring Russian use of US funds and as US-based partners perform tasks more expensively than Russians could themselves. Finally, Luongo identifies several recommendations to maintain the cooperative agenda.

"The Uncertain Future of U.S.-Russian Cooperative Security"

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Military

1. ROK Missile Program

The New York Times reported that the US and the ROK have completed an agreement which will permit the ROK to build and deploy missiles with a range of up to 187 miles, an increase from a 1979 agreement to limit ROK missiles to a range of 112 miles. Local ROK media reported that ROK government sources had stated that the ROK could increase the range to 310 miles if it reduced the payload to somewhere below 1,100 pounds, putting nearly all locations in the DPRK in range.

"South Korea To Develop Missiles"

"Text Only"

2. Gulf War

On January 17, 1991, the US and its allies initiated Operation Desert Storm, quickly nicknamed the Gulf War. In connection with the anniversary, the National Security Archive has placed a collection of declassified and unclassified documents concerning Desert Storm on its web site. The documents primarily focus on the intelligence, space support, Scud-hunting, and stealth (F-117A) elements of the conflict.

"Desert Storm Anniversary: Documents On the Web"

Stars and Stripes' special correspondent William Arkin describes the "opening night" of the war against Iraq ten years ago on January 17. Although the headlines of the war are well known, Arkin writes, "On this 10th anniversary of the Persian Gulf War, it is sad how little of true Desert Storm history is acknowledged." Despite the aura of accuracy and high-tech that surrounds the Gulf War, and which has strongly influenced military planning and weapons procurement ever since, Arkin describes how several of the first and crucial bombing missions failed to hit their target or had to be attempted over and over again before the target was destroyed. The performance of new and advanced weapon systems such as the stealth fighter and air- and sea-launched cruise missiles were far from as impressive as the strike videos the public was shown on television might lead one to believe. The article is the 25th in a series of weekly briefings on central, but often unknown, aspects of the Gulf War. Arkin, who was the first person to be allowed to conduct a bomb damage assessment inside Iraq after the war, has assembled perhaps the most complete unofficial account of Operational Desert Storm.

"Operation Desert Storm: The Opening Night"

Security

1. US Nuclear Policy

The US Secretary of Defense released its annual report on defense spending to the President and the Congress. The report, which outlines how a total of \$227 billion has been added to US defense spending over the last three years, reaffirms that nuclear forces and nuclear defense are critical elements of US national security and "will remain so into the future."

Modernization of nuclear forces in 2001 includes modifications to the B-2 bombers, conversion of four strategic submarines to carry the Trident II missile, extension of the Trident II missile service life, improvements to the Minuteman ICBM force, and air force advance planning for a new ICBM around 2020. The report reaffirms the need to maintain "survivable strategic forces of sufficient size and diversity," and confirms the continued deployment of US nuclear bombs in European countries.

"Annual Defense Report Outlines Modernizations"

"Previous Reports on Modernization"

Theresa Hitchens, Research Director at the British American Security Information Council (BASIC), writes that the US must not only cut its nuclear arsenal as part of a nuclear posture review, but must make an effort to conduct an in-depth review of the underlying nuclear policy because of the growing disconnect between current US foreign policy and its Cold War-era nuclear policy. Hitchens states that experts both for and against nuclear weapons agree that traditional arms control is dead, but there are different policy prescriptions to cope with this fact, and therefore little agreement on what to expect from a nuclear policy review. Hitchens recommends that the review be conducted by an inter-agency body beyond the US Defense and Energy Departments, with input from the military beyond the Defense Department, that the review be linked to the Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review, and finally, that the review be conducted recognizing the inter-play between US nuclear posture and US foreign policy objectives, including non-proliferation and arms control.

"If Its Broken, Fix It: A New U.S. Nuclear Policy Needs To Start From Fundamentals"

"Text Only"

2. US Space Security

A commission appointed the US Senate and US House of Representatives Armed Service Committee and the Secretary of Defense, led by Secretary of Defense-designate Donald Rumsfeld, released its report this week on the organization and management of space activities that support of US national security. The Commission unanimously concluded that it is in the US national interest to promote the peaceful use of space, use the nation's potential in space to support US security objectives and develop and deploy the means to protect US space-based assets from hostile acts. The report identified threats to US space-based assets and called for increased defenses for US satellites. The New York Times reports that Rumsfeld has focused his public work on proliferation issues and other strategic threats to the US.

"Report of the Commission to Assess U.S. National Security Space Management and Organization"

"Sino-US Relations (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 16)"

"U.S. Should Improve Defense of Satellites, Panel Advises"

"Text only"

3. US Defense Spending

An editorial in the New York Times questions how high the budget will go for the US Defense Department, given that Defense Secretary-designate Donald Rumsfeld plans expansive increases in many areas. The editorial states that while there could be a freeing up of funds from programs that are redundant or those Congressionally mandated but never requested by the Defense Department, most problematic is his support for the expensive and untested National Missile Defense (NMD) and his dismissal of international arms control treaties like the ABM Treaty. The editorial concludes by suggesting that the US Congress demand that a full review of NMD be completed, including its diplomatic risks.

"The Expansive Agenda at Defense"

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4. India-Pakistan Nuclear Risk Reduction

Pakistan's Islamabad Policy Research Institute will host a six-member Indian team composed of former government and military officials for meetings to discuss nuclear risk reduction and related issues. The Indian team is from the Delhi Policy Group. The team received a briefing at Pakistan's Foreign Office and met with Pakistan Foreign Secretary Inamul Huq. They discussed several bilateral issues but expressed that Kashmir and nuclear issues were not interdependent. The meeting is part of ongoing Track II efforts to promote confidence-building measures, but the Indian delegation may meet with Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar.

"Indian, Pakistani experts call for nuclear risk reduction"

"Track II Talks (SANDNet Weekly Update, Vol. 2 #3)"

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