

# NAPSNET Weekly FLASH Update 23 October, 2000

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## Nuclear Weapons

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### 1. Russian Fissile Materials

After reporting that it may have to close its plant without government help to prop up sagging prices caused partly by the influx of Russian uranium, USEC Inc. said that it is ahead of schedule in completing 20 percent of a deal to buy overpriced uranium derived from dismantled Russian nuclear warheads. USEC said that the program has converted weapons-grade uranium into nearly 3,000 metric tons of commercial reactor fuel to generate electricity in the US. There may be a conflict of interest for USEC in balancing business with nuclear disarmament.

"USEC Happy With Uranium Deal Timeline"

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### 2. US "Mini-Nukes"

Legislation contained in the final 2001 defense authorization bill due to be approved by the US Congress this week contains a provision to authorize research on low-yield nuclear devices, known as "mini-nukes" and designed to be used against "hardened" and deeply buried targets. Advocates of mini-nukes contend that the US is restricting its options by having only large nuclear weapons in its arsenal. However opponents argue that development could lead to new testing that would gut the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and that the weapons themselves are controversial because they are regarded as tactical or battlefield weapons, and thus more likely to be deployed.

"Bill Would Give Push To 'mini-nuke'"

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## Missile Defense

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## **1. Missile Defense Tests**

The Israeli Defense Forces declared that Israel's anti-missile shield based on the Arrow-2 rocket is finally operational. Israel is the first country to have a functioning defense against surface-to-surface missiles.

"Arrow Anti-Missile Shield Is Operational"

The US Department of Defense's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization and the US Army tested the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 missile. The missile intercepted and destroyed a target missile, launched from Fort Wingate in northwestern New Mexico.

"Army Reports Success In Anti-Missile Missile Test"

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## **2. Missile Defense Commentary**

Michael R Gordon, in an article in the New York Times, argues that enemies of the US are seeking to find US weaknesses. Gordon stated that their real weapons of choice are harbor boats and truck bombs, not intercontinental-range missiles. Also, their targets are US military compounds abroad and the logistics systems that are needed to keep the US military going, and the only real defense is better intelligence about terrorist groups' activities.

"Military Analysis: Superpower Suddenly Finds Itself Threatened by Sophisticated Terrorists"

"Full-text"

The Center for Defense Information has produced an in-depth online report with information on the national missile defense program. The Issue Brief, "National Missile Defense: What Does It All Mean?" covers major aspects of the missile defense debate, including: missile threats, the cost of the program, technical difficulties in the development of NMD, and the impact on US allies and other strategic actors.

"NMD Issue Brief"

Jack Spencer and Michael Scardaville, both of the Davis Institute for International Studies at The Heritage Foundation, argue in the Miami Herald that deployment of NMD will not lead to a new arms race. They cite as evidence tests by several countries of missile programs after the decision by US President Bill Clinton to not deploy NMD.

"In Defense Of Development Of Missiles"

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## **3. Alternative NMD Systems**

Rodney W Jones, in a Council for a Livable World Education Fund Report, assessed the cost of building and deploying a global sea-based NMD system against long-range missiles, as well as recent proposals for boost-phase missile defenses. In the report, Jones argues that sea-based and boost-phase alternatives to national missile defense (NMD) would be more expensive and could not be deployed until 2014.

"Taking National Missile Defense to Sea: A Critique of Sea-Based and Boost-Phase Proposals"

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## **Arms Control**

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## **1. START-III Talks**

A statement by the Russian Foreign Ministry, made following talks here between the US arms control official John Holum and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov, said that Russia saw no political or military obstacles to prevent a disarmament accord that slashes US and Russian nuclear stockpiles to 1,500 warheads each. However, the statement repeated Russia's insistence that any accord keep intact the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which the US would like to amend to permit development of its NMD system.

"No Political, Military Obstacle to U.S.-Russia Arms Accord"

Arms control talks between the US and Russia concluded in Moscow on 18 October. The Russian team was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov and the US team by Undersecretary of State for arms control John Holum. The Russia Foreign Ministry released a statement after the talks concluded which insisted that talks on the START-III treaty begin as soon as possible. The statement said that there is "no objective political or military reason" why the US and Russia should not reduce their warheads to 1,500 each under START-III. The statement also stressed Russian opposition to amending the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

"Moscow Pushes For Start-III Talks To Begin"

US Undersecretary of State John Holum was expected in Moscow on Monday for talks on nuclear disarmament and missile defense systems. He was expected to meet with Russia's Yuri Kapralov, director of the Foreign Ministry's Security and Disarmament Department, and Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov, to discuss the proposed START III arms reduction treaty.

"U.S. Officials In Moscow For Talks On Afghanistan, Nuclear Disarmament"

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## **2. Russian Nuclear Waste**

Russia and the US unveiled the US-funded facility in the town of Severodvinsk that will help Russia to tackle the problem of low-level radioactive waste extracted from nuclear submarines scrapped under START strategic disarmament agreements with the US. Russia has the necessary capacity to deal with nuclear fuel but has little experience with storing low-level waste in the form of reactor cooling liquids, laundry wastewater and radioactive solids. The US Common Threat Reduction directorate will oversee the US\$17 million project.

"Russia Opens U.S.-Funded Nuclear Waste Facility"

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## **3. Linkages to Arms Control**

Monte Bullard, Senior Fellow at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, argues that the relationship between the Taiwan issue and PRC policies on arms control and nonproliferation is both direct and indirect. Just as the US linked Most-Favored Nation status to PRC human rights behavior, the PRC has begun to implicitly link its arms control and nonproliferation commitments to US security support to Taiwan.

"Undiscussed Linkages: Implications of Taiwan Straits Security Activity on Global Arms Control and Nonproliferation"

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## **Proliferation**

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## **1. Russian Proliferation: Iran**

John A. Lauder, Director of Central Intelligence Directorate's Nonproliferation Center, testified to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations regarding Russian contribution to Iran's weapons of mass destruction and missile programs.

"Statement by John A. Lauder, Director, Directorate of Central Intelligence's Nonproliferation Center"

Sergei Ivanov, head of the Russian Security Council, said that the Russian government is determined to expand its relations with Iran. He said, "There is a determination among Russian leaders to have strong relations with Iran on many fronts and we are serious about pursuing them." Russia has denied allegations made by the US that it is providing ballistic and nuclear missiles technology to Iran.

"Russian Security Chief Hails Growing Ties With Iran"

The Washington Times reported that US Vice President Al Gore did not tell members of the US Congress about details of Russian nuclear cooperation with Iran after receiving a letter from then Russian Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin urging him to keep the deal secret.

Disclosure of the letter comes soon after The Washington Times said that both the letter and the deal were kept from Congress, although a spokesman for Gore's presidential campaign insisted members of Congress were briefed on the conventional arms deal. The Washington Times also quoted from another secret letter in which Secretary of State Madeleine Albright indicates that Russia was not living up to its promise in the secret agreement to halt conventional arms deliveries to the Iranians by 2000.

"Report: Gore Kept Russian Deal Secret"

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## **2. Iranian WMD Systems**

Robert J. Einhorn, Assistant US Secretary of State for Nonproliferation, testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee regarding Iran's efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction and missile delivery systems, the foreign assistance Iran has received in these programs, and US programs to halt the proliferation of these weapons to Iran.

"Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation Robert J. Einhorn Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee"

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## **3. Afghani Nuclear Weapons Program**

Russian Security Council official Raisa Vdovichenko reported that Taliban agents have sought to recruit at least one Russian expert on nuclear weapons.

"[Russia]...Accuses Taliban Of Seeking To Acquire Nuclear Potential"

US Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering arrived in Moscow for talks on Afghanistan's involvement in international terrorism.

"U.S. Officials In Moscow For Talks On Afghanistan, Nuclear Disarmament"

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## **4. IAEA Inspections in Iraq**

The UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said it could resume work at "short notice" if inspectors were allowed back into Iraq. The IAEA said in a report that once inspectors return and find no new nuclear activities, they could move to a less intrusive type of monitoring. Inspections of Iraqi facilities have not been conducted since inspectors left in December 1998.

"Nuclear inspectors ready to resume work in Iraq at 'short notice'"

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## **5. Future US Views on Non-proliferation**

The Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies published a report edited by Michael Barletta. The report contains multiple articles each on new ways to view nonproliferation, the possible nonproliferation policies under US President Gore or Bush, nonproliferation policy under Russian President Vladimir Putin, specific nonproliferation challenges in Asia, and a review of the Monterey Nonproliferation Strategy Group session.

"Proliferation Challenges and Nonproliferation Opportunities for New Administrations"

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## **Security**

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### **1. PRC Defense White Paper**

The PRC's Information Office of the State Council published a defense white paper, titled "China's National Defense in 2000." The white paper stressed that the PRC pursues a national defense policy that is defensive in nature. Regarding the issue of nuclear weapons, the white paper reiterated the PRC position that its small number of nuclear weapons is entirely for self-defense and that the PRC undertakes not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states. It added that the PRC maintains a small but effective nuclear counterattacking force in order to deter possible nuclear attacks by other countries.

"Summary of China Defense White Paper"

"China's national defense in 2000"

The US State Department rebuked the PRC for harsh comments on Taiwan in the PRC's latest Defense White Paper, which warns of "drastic action" in the event of any move by Taiwan towards independence or an indefinite refusal to engage in reunification talks. The White Paper notes the existence of "hegemonism and power politics," references to the US, and therefore the PRC "will have to enhance its capability to defend its sovereignty and security by military means." The article states that the PRC clearly is deeply troubled by what it sees as changes to its security environment, and sees the US as responsible for these changes.

"China's Defence White Paper"

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### **2. Russian Submarines**

Chief of the Russian Navy Admiral Vladimir Kuroyedov said that he may scrap the recovery of crewmen's remains from the Kursk nuclear submarine if experts decide that the operation is too risky. He said, "If the analysis of the situation inside the submarine's hull shows it's dangerous and too risky for the divers, I will be forced to give orders to cancel the operation. We mustn't allow the operation at the site of the catastrophe to turn into yet another severe shock for all of us." Many naval experts have pointed out that the divers would be in mortal danger by working in their bulky pressure suits inside the cramped submarine compartments, which are likely littered with jagged pieces of metal and other debris.

"Submarine Recovery May Be Canceled"

"Text-only"

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### 3. NATO Policy Planning

Ronald Asmus, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, spoke at the October 3 meeting of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Europe Program's new series on the 2002 NATO summit. Asmus argues that NATO's future agenda can be summarized as "reunification, rebalancing, reorientation, retooling, and Russia." He concludes that NATO can force its agenda upon the next US administration, but this also presents an opportunity to affect the international system at a time when US strength is uncontested.

"NATO 2002: THE AGENDA AHEAD"

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