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United States

1. US Security Strategy

The United States Commission on National Security/21st Century, co- chaired by former US Senators Gary Hart and Warren Rudman, released the first of three planned papers on US Security for the coming century. The paper attempts to describe the world emerging in the first quarter of the next century. The White House outlined its security strategy for the coming century, focusing on enhancing US security, bolstering US economic prosperity, and supporting democracy abroad.

"New World Coming: American Security in the 21st Century"

"A National Security Strategy for a New Century (PDF)"

"A National Security Strategy for a New Century (html)"

"US National Military Strategy"

2. US Nuclear Arsenal

The Natural Resources Defense Council published a review of the Draft Interim Report of the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board (SEAB) Task Force on the National Ignition Facility (NIF), a laser designed to simulate conditions of a nuclear weapons explosion that is under construction at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California. NRDC points to significant shortcomings in the DOE Task Force's report, which it characterizes as "manifestly vague, misleading, contradictory or incomplete on a number of important points," and warns that risks identified in the Draft Interim Report are "very substantial, and possibly even crippling" to the NIF project.

"NRDC Critiques DOE Laser Review"

3. US Arms Control

Joseph Cirincione, director of the Non-Proliferation Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, writes in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists that the US Senate's rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is part of a larger war over the future of the nonproliferation regime, the value of nuclear weapons, and the US role in the world.

"The Assault on Arms Control"

Russia

4. Russian Nuclear Strategy

First Deputy Chief of the Russian Armed Forces General Staff Valery Manilov said on January 14 that Russia's draft new military doctrine clearly states that Russia has the right to use nuclear armaments, but only in case of an aggression against itself or its allies. Dr. Nikolai Sokov, Senior Research Associate at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, argues that the major difference in the new security concept is that nuclear weapons are no longer reserved solely for extreme situations; now they can be used in a small-scale war that does not necessarily threaten Russia's existence. STRATFOR argues that components of Russia's the doctrine suggest that acting president Vladimir Putin has wanted to signal that Russian nuclear weapons could be used in the conflict in Chechnya.

"Russia can use nuke arms only in case of aggression"

"Russia's New National Security Concept: The Nuclear Angle"

"STRATFOR Says Russian Nukes Has Internal Role."

5. Implementation of START-1

A team of the Russian Armed Forces's National Center for Lessening the Nuclear Threat finalized engineering and topographic preparations at a US site liable for non-stop monitoring under the START-1 arms reduction treaty.

"Russian experts do works in USA under START-1."

6. US-Russian Early Warning Cooperation

In BASIC's latest newsletter, Martin Butcher argues that the shared early warning center established by the US and Russia to deal with potential problems resulting from the millennium date rollover should form the basis of permanent shared early warning measures to prevent accidental nuclear war.

"BASIC REPORTS"

People's Republic of China

7. US-PRC Relations

The National Security Archives has published an Electronic Briefing Book on US-PRC relations. It includes samples from the approximately 15,000 pages of documentation on US-PRC relations that are published in the NSA's "China and the United States: From Hostility to Engagement, 1960- 1998" document set. Kenneth Allen, a Senior Associate at the Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington, argues that opponents of US military exchanges with the PRC miss the degree to which such exchanges are beneficial to US military intelligence.

"China and the United States: From Hostility to Engagement, 1960-1998"

"U.S.-China Military Relations Not a One-Way Street"

8. PRC Nonproliferation Community

The Center for Nonproliferation Studies published a chart outlining the principle organizations involved in arms control and nonproliferation in the PRC.

"Principal Organizations in China's Nonproliferation and Arms Control Community"

Taiwan Straits

9. Cross-Straits Military Balance

James H. Nolt argues that despite rapid economic growth and public attempts to modernize its military, the PRC is actually becoming weaker militarily relative to Taiwan and all of its other potential rivals except Russia. Chen Pi-chao, a counselor at the Taiwan National Security Council, maintains that the PRC enjoys a quantitative military superiority over Taiwan, and will eventually catch up in terms of quality. Larry Wortzel, director of the Asian Studies Center at the Heritage Foundation, argues that the US should be paying closer attention to the military buildup and anti-Taiwan rhetoric of the PRC, warning that if the situation worsens, it will likely require a US military response.

"The China-Taiwan Military Balance"

"The Military Balance Across the Taiwan Strait"

"Dealing With the China-Taiwan Puzzle"

10. 1996 Taiwan Straits Crisis

In a new book, "A Great Wall: Six Presidents and China," former Beijing correspondent for the New York Times Patrick Tyler writes that Taiwan was prepared to mount a counteroffensive against the PRC in 1996, when the PRC was test-firing missiles into the waters near Taiwan. Taiwan's military leadership informed the United States that if the People's Liberation Army attacked the island, they would launch a comprehensive counterattack which would include the use of bombers against the PLA air force and missiles aimed at mainland military bases and radar installations.

"Taiwan Planned Counterattack During 1996 Crisis"

Missile Defense

11. US Missile Defense Test

Preliminary data indicates two infrared sensors aboard the exoatmospheric kill vehicle, an experimental missile, caused the failure of a US National Missile Defense test January 18. Other guidance systems -- both on the ground and aboard the rocket -- worked well, said a senior military official. In response to a report in the New York Times that a previous anti-ballistic missile defense test was partially flawed, US Defense Department spokesman Kenneth Bacon emphasized to the media: "The test succeeded; the target was hit."

"Infrared Systems Cause Missile Test to Fail."

"DoD Background Briefing: Ballistic Missile Intercept Test, Jan. 19, 2000"

"DoD Background Briefing: National Missile Defense, Jan. 14, 2000"

"DOD Briefing on Failed NMD Test."

"Hit Proves NMD Test Was A Success."

12. Analyses of US Missile Defense

The Union of Concerned Scientists in a press release called on US President Bill Clinton to postpone a July decision on whether to approve deployment of a national missile defense system in light of the second National Missile Defense intercept test's failure to hit its target. John Isaacs, president of Council for a Livable World, said that while there is no reason to read total "failure" into the latest test, it reinforces the necessity to avoid "a rush to failure." Retired US Colonel Dan Smith, Chief of Research at the Center for Defense Information, evaluates the latest NMD test, and warns that even a failure of six seconds could be devastating.

"President Should Delay Missile Defense Deployment Decision, Require Realistic Testing"

"National Missile Defense Test Failure: Not Yet Ready for Prime Time"

"Six Seconds That Didn't Shake the World"

Stratfor argues that the new strategic threat will not come from rogue regimes but instead from coalitions built around true nuclear powers such as Russia and China. It adds that the debate over national missile defense is distracting the US military from forging a space strategy that protects satellites, the keys to US conventional military power. Nicholas Berry, Senior Analyst at the Center for Defense Information, argues that reports on proliferation of weapons of mass destruction focus too much on the weapons themselves and not enough on the motives and intentions of countries seeking the technology. He says that these countries arm themselves primarily for some very real and very important domestic political reasons.

"National Missile Defenses: Fighting the Last War"

"Too Much Hysteria Over Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction"

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