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Nuclear Weapons

1. US Nuclear Forces

US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced that the detailed 2002 budget proposal that will be presented to Congress will include a request to dismantle all fifty of the US nuclear MX "Peacekeeper" missiles as part of the US unilateral disarmament plan. US Air Force officials report that it costs in excess of \$70 million per year to maintain the MX fleet and the Defense Department is seeking an initial \$17 million to begin retiring them. It is unclear whether the W-87 warheads used on the MX would be dismantled or used to replace warheads currently on Minuteman missiles. Rumsfeld stated that he had been forced to decide the fate of the missiles before the results of a panel ordered to revisit the US nuclear force posture. Congress must approve the decision because of a Clinton-era law that prevents reducing the US nuclear forces below Start I levels. Rumsfeld's budget proposal includes a \$3 billion increase in spending on missile defense, to \$8.3 billion, calls for cutting the nation's fleet of B-1 bombers to about 60, from 93, This indicates that Rumsfeld intends to keep the US Air Force's fleet of B-52 bombers, which are older than the B-1s but have missiles that can be fired a great distance from their target, making the planes less vulnerable to air defenses. Defense officials said there has been no decision on the B-2 stealth bomber program.

"Pentagon to Seek Authority to Cut B-1 Fleet by a Third"

"Rumsfeld Wants Fleet of B-1 Bombers Trimmed"

"Pentagon to Retire 33 Bombers"

"Pentagon to Ask for Retirement of MX Missiles"

Included in the US Defense Department's budget request is \$100 million to begin converting two Ohio-class Trident submarines from a nuclear missile payload to carry cruise missiles. The submarines are scheduled for decommissioning under a nuclear arms control treaty with Russia. The move is supported in the submarines' home port in Georgia because it will create jobs there.

"Bush moves to convert Trident subs"

"Pentagon to Seek Authority to Cut B-1 Fleet by a Third"

2. US Nuclear Testing

Following a recent study that concluded that the one to three years it takes to prepare a nuclear test could allow political opponents to block any resumption of nuclear testing, the Bush administration has asked US nuclear weapons scientists to examine ways that nuclear test explosions beneath the Nevada desert could be accomplished more quickly in case the government decides to end a nine-year moratorium on nuclear testing. US President George Bush has said he has no plans to end the US moratorium, but Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld have argued in favor of periodically detonating randomly selected warheads underground. "This is all part of a well-coordinated effort inside and outside the government to basically resume production of nuclear weapons," said Stephen Schwartz, publisher of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

"Bush asks scientists to study nuclear testing capabilities"

3. Russian Missile Test

Russia carried out a test launch this week of its RS-18 intercontinental ballistic missile, known as SS-19 "Stiletto" in the West, as a thinly-veiled warning to the US to not build a missile defence shield. Russian military officials stated that the Stiletto's multiple warhead capacity has a greater chance of overcoming an enemy's defence system than more modern missile systems. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that Start-2, which prohibits multiple warheads on a missile, would be automatically void if the US abrogates the 1972 ABM Treaty to build a missile defence system. Interfax reports that Russia currently has 140 RS-18 missiles and that their number will be reduced to 105 after scheduled cuts.

"Russia shows off combat readiness"

"Russia Test-Fires Ballistic Missile"

US Secretary of State Colin Powell downplayed threats by Russian President Vladimir Putin to reintroduce multiple warheads to Russian ballistic missiles. Powell said that Russia will not do this once it realizes the economic costs and recognizes that the shield would not be oriented at Russia.

"Powell dismisses Putin missile upgrade warning"

Missile Defense

1. US Statements

An essay by US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was published in the Wall Street Journal, in which he argued, "A policy of intentional vulnerability by the Western nations could give this state the power to hold us hostage," which "leaves us with three choices in the face of aggression: acquiesce and allow the rogue to invade its neighbors; oppose it and put Western population centers at risk; or pre-empt its action." He argues that the pace of change will continue as rapidly as it did over the past seventy-five years, which will leave the US vulnerable in many ways, including a growing threat from ballistic missiles. Rumsfeld argues that defenses built against these missiles will not be a threat to anyone, but "will require moving beyond the ABM Treaty." He concludes with the argument that "missile defenses are just one element of a larger new framework for 21st-century deterrence."

"Toward 21st-Century Deterrence"

2. US Budget

A senior defense official briefed the media on the 2002 budget amendment proposed by the US Defense Department, which would raise overall Defense Department spending to \$329 billion. This amendment adds \$600 million for missile defense on top of the earlier budget blueprint of \$1.6 billion, bringing the total to \$7.5 billion in 2002 for missile defense.

"Background Briefing on the Fiscal Year 2002 Budget Amendment"

Defense officials stated that the 2002 budget will include funds to begin building a set of five interceptor missiles at Ft. Greeley, near Fairbanks, Alaska. The officials stated that the site will initially be a missile defense test range that could be converted into a rudimentary national missile system as early as 2004. Joseph Cirincione, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, called the idea that a test facility was needed a "transparent ploy" to conceal the administration's interest in forcing an end to the treaty. He predicted that the proposal to build the site "will have a hard time getting through the Senate." Missile defense officials, however, maintained that their latest plan is just one part of a broader effort to provide more frequent and realistic testing of antimissile systems.

"Bush Budget Lays Foundation for National Missile Shield"

3. UK Statements

A group of more than 170 British Ministers of Parliament, including chairman of the Parliamentary Labor Party Clive Soley, Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesman Menzies Campbell and SDLP leader John Hume, have urged British Prime Minister Tony Blair to challenge US President George Bush over his missile defence plans. Blair has so far adopted a "wait and see approach" to the US system, but many MPs are pressing the government to follow the advice of the Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee and "voice grave doubts about NMD in the UK." Iain Duncan Smith, the shadow defence secretary and Tory leadership candidate, said the Commons motion showed a revolt in the Labor ranks over NMD. Smith said, "The missile threat from rogue states is growing. This motion shows the Labor party cannot be trusted with Britain's defence. Britain should be supporting the US with its plans to build a missile defence system that will protect not just the US, but also Britain and other European allies."

"Confront Bush on Star Wars' - MPs"

4. Russian Statements

Russian General Leonid Ivashov, the head of the Defense Ministry's Department of International Cooperation, said that Russia was willing "to sit down at the negotiating table for consultations with NATO and the United States, assess the world situation, and we are ready to discuss missile threats." However, he said, Russia will insist on sticking to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty that bans nationwide missile defense.

"General Says Russia Willing to Talk"

5. Japanese Perspective

Michael Swaine and Rachel Swanger of the RAND Corporation and Takashi Kawakami of the Japan National Institute for Defense Studies co-authored a RAND report examining the factor's affecting Japan's approach to ballistic missile defense. The report states that, spurred by a perceived growing ballistic missile threat from within the Asia-Pacific region and requests from the United States to support research and development on components of a missile defense system, the Japanese government decided in late 1998 and early 1999 to move forward with joint research and development with the US on ballistic missile defense (BMD). The report explores the benefits and potential problems of deploying a BMD system in Japan.

"Japan and Ballistic Missile Defense"

Proliferation

1. US Sanctions

US State Department spokeswoman Susan Pittman said yesterday that the US has imposed sanctions against two PRC and DPRK companies for helping Iran in violation of international pacts aimed at curbing the proliferation of deadly weapons. She would not specify which international pact was at issue or give details of the alleged transfer, but Congressional aides are reported to have said they had believe the violations fell under the Chemical Weapons Convention. The two companies were also hit with sanctions during the Clinton administration.

"U.S. Sanctions North Korean, Chinese Firms"

Security

1. US Nuclear Force Posture

Several US Congressmen issued a press release announcing their introduction to Congress of the Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 2001. The act, sponsored by Senator Mary Landrieu and Representatives John Spratt and Ellen Tauscher, seeks to repeal a current law preventing the US from reducing its nuclear arsenal below START I levels, remove nuclear weapons from high-alert status, and increase funding for programs designed to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons or their expertise from Russia.

"Full Text of the Bill"

"More information on the bill"

"Common Ground Sought for Nuclear Security in 21st Century"

2. South Asia Nuclear Issues

The Henry L. Stimson Center released a report edited by Michael Krepon and Chris Gagne with five essays that focus on the complex triangular nuclear interaction among India, Pakistan, and China. These essays examine nuclear dangers in the region and propose strategies for reducing these dangers through political, diplomatic, and technical means. The report contains essays by Michael Krepon, P.R. Chari, Chris Gagne, Kent Biringner and Harinder Baweja. Pakistani daily The Jang argues that the report, because of the author list, appears biased towards Indian and US perspectives and ignores the Pakistani perspective. "The Stability-Instability Paradox: Nuclear Weapons and Brinkmanship in South Asia"
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