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Missile Defense

1. US NMD System

US President Bill Clinton has decided to forego deployment of a National Missile Defense (NMD) system and decided not to initiate the construction of a key NMD radar site in Alaska. In announcing his decision President Clinton said, "I simply cannot conclude with the information I have today that we have enough confidence in the technology, and the operational effectiveness of the entire NMD system, to move forward to deployment. Therefore, I have decided not to authorize deployment of a national missile defense at this time."

"President of the United States Remarks on National Missile Defense"

"Clinton hands NMD decision to successor"

The US Defense Department and the US State Department are sharply divided over how far work on a limited NMD system would proceed before the US needed to give formal notice that it would withdraw from the ABM Treaty.

"Washington Split Deepens in Debate Over Missile Plan"

Stanley Orman said MIT physicists can design countermeasures that theoretically could confuse missile defenses, but argued that the published descriptions of possible countermeasures represents a way of undermining the planned national missile defense by instructing adversaries on possible ways to defeat it.

"Counters To U.S. Missile Defense Technology Unlikely"

The US Defense Department assessed Boeing's cost problems as it prepared its recommendation to President Bill Clinton on whether the US should proceed with deployment.

"Pentagon Says Boeing Has Big Overruns On Missile Defense Costs"

The US Army/Israel Tactical High Energy Laser (THEL) tracked and shot down two Katyusha rockets, successfully completing its first test against multiple rockets. "THEL Shoots Down Two Rockets"

National Missile Defense program planners have more analysis to do before deciding if they want to prioritize a jump-start for the Boeing ground-based interceptor (GBI) for a future NMD system after the failure of the system's most recent flight test. The GBI is behind schedule, but is the fastest way for a limited NMD, argued US Army Major General Willie Nance Jr., NMD program executive officer and system program director at the US Department of Defense's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for August 23, 2000.] "BMDO Wants More Analysis Before Setting A New NMD Test Date"

2. US NMD Diplomacy

John Holum, US State Department undersecretary for arms control and international security, discussed with Danish and Greenland officials proposals to upgrade an existing US radar station on the Arctic island as part of the National Missile Defense (NMD) system.

"U.S. Official Discusses Missile Shield Plan"

"U.S. Discusses Missile Shield in Greenland"

3. Effect of US NMD Policy

The Heritage Foundation published an essay by Peter Brooks, in which he argued that the effect the PRC is having upon the proposed National Missile Defense (NMD) and Theater Missile Defense (TMD) program is under-discussed. Changes in the PRC's capability, doctrine, and proliferation practices require an appropriate response from the US to deter and, if necessary, defend against it.

"Theater Missile Defense: How Will It Recast Security and Diplomacy in East Asia?"

The US government's focus on Asia has created the threat perception that is driving the National Missile Defense (NMD) program and simultaneously led it to ignore its European allies. "Had we prioritized conversations with our allies a year ago, we might not be having this open debate on NMD right now," said Dr. Sean Kay, a Politics and Government professor at Ohio Wesleyan University.

"Pushing the Wedge: NMD and U.S. Alliances"

4. NMD Alternatives

John Deutch, Harold Brown, and John P. White argued that a theater missile defense system would be better alternative to the Clinton administration's national missile defense proposal, and would do less to antagonize Russia and the PRC.

"National Missile Defense: Is There Another Way?"

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov argued that while the recently delayed US national missile defense system focuses on threats from problem states, a US decision to move ahead on the system's development would have dangerous unintended consequences.

"THE MISSILE-DEFENSE MISTAKE"

John Arquilla, professor of defense analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School, argued in favor of the "third way" proposed by Russian President Vladimir Putin, in which Putin offered to engage in joint research with the US on missile defense. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for August 22, 2000.]

"A Missile-Defense 'Third Way'"

Nuclear Weapons

1. Nuclear Weapons Deployment

According to the Russian weekly Obshchaya Gazeta, by the end of 2001 the Strategic Missile Forces will lose a division as well as 26 launchers of R-36M missiles, five regiments will be disbanded, and by 2003 the armed forces will become transformed into a three-branch structure composed of the air force, navy, and ground forces.

"More Information Leaked On Security Council Meeting"

Viktor Mikhailov, director of the Strategic Stability Institute and member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said nuclear missile weapons will be a reliable instrument for ensuring global stability in the foreseeable future.

"Nukes Reliable Instrument of Ensuring Global Stability"

Stephen Younger, chief weaponeer at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, argued in a US Defense Department-sponsored paper that the US should develop "precision low-yield" nuclear weapons that could be used for attacking "modern targets" such as buried bunkers and mobile missiles.

"Nuclear Weapons in the Twenty-First Century"

For previous debates about mini-nukes, see also:

"US Nuclear Posture Review"

"Tinynukes for mini minds"

"Those Lovable Little Bombs"

2. WMD Proliferation

According to a biannual US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report on global weapons of mass destruction (WMD) acquisition, proliferators are continuing their efforts to develop WMDs and insulate those programs from external interference.

"CIA warns of continuing trend towards global WMD"

Tara O'Toole, deputy director of Johns Hopkins University's Center for Civilian Biodefense Studies, suggested that the US is more vulnerable to bio-terrorism than to nuclear attack, and proposed devoting \$30 billion over the next 10 years to prepare health care systems to detect, track, respond to and contain epidemics that could be triggered by biological weapons. The US Department of Health and Human Services says it is spending \$278 million this fiscal year to prepare for bioterrorism. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for August 23, 2000.]

"Researcher Suggests \$30 Billion Plan For Bioterrorism Defense"

3. Arms Control & Disarmament

The US seeks to stop proliferation while holding on to its own arsenal indefinitely. Though nuclear restrictions falter and the absence of a middle ground becomes apparent, arms control has become a way of avoiding a fateful choice between proliferation and a non-nuclear world.

"THE FOLLY OF ARMS CONTROL"

The UN Department for Disarmament Affairs' Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific convened a conference which considered tactics for achieving peace and security in the Asia-Pacific, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the role of nuclear-weapon States.

"UN-sponsored disarmament meeting opens in Japan"

The Japanese government has decided to strengthen the language in a disarmament resolution scheduled for its annual submission to the UN General Assembly

"Japanese Government to Submit Antinuclear Bill to U.N."

The Verification, Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) has announced the convening of a Commission which will produce a report assessing the likelihood that countries would be caught if they attempted to cheat on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

"Independent Commission on the Verifiability of the CTBT Formed"

4. UN Arms Inspections

Following statements by the Iraqi government that it will not submit to inspections by the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, the UN Security Council has persuaded the chairman of UNMOVIC to cancel his announcement that weapons inspectors are ready to return to Iraq. Security Council members want to avoid the political confrontations that could erupt over the issue until after the UN Millennium Summit.

"U.N. Arms Inspectors Back Down"

5. Russian Nuclear Policy

Senior research associate at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies Nikolai Sokov wrote that Russia will continue to rely on nuclear weapons as an interim measure until conventional weapons are improved, but it will also seek deep reductions of its nuclear arsenal through negotiated arms control agreements.

"The Fate of Russian Nuclear Weapons: An Anticlimax on"

Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov said that Russia wants to reduce the number of nuclear weapons "to the minimally allowable point." and still maintain its great power status. Kasyanov also said that Russia could receive nuclear wastes from other countries for permanent disposition.

"Kasyanov Argues Russia Needs Only Minimal Number Of Nuclear Arms"

6. US Nuclear Conversion Programs

US Energy Secretary Bill Richardson visited a Russian military conversion project and promised \$13 million to accelerate the transformation of a nuclear weapons production facility into a civilian technology park. The Energy Department's three-year old Nuclear Cities Initiative has targeted ten weapons centers to retrain employees to prevent rogue states from buying Russian nuclear expertise.

"Energy Secretary Visits Russia"

"U.S. and Russia Open a Nuclear Swords-to-Plowshares Project"

US Energy Secretary Bill Richardson announced that two-and-a half tons of weapons-grade plutonium were secured from the BN-350 breeder reactor in Kazakhstan. The US will support efforts to plan for the safe destruction of the reactor and will award up to \$4 million to reduce the risk of scientists' migration to countries of proliferation concern.

"U.S. Secretary Richardson Highlights Strong U.S.-Kazakhstan Economic Relationship Expands Energy Cooperation; Announces Non-Proliferation Progress "

US Defense Secretary Cohen said the US position as the sole superpower attracts asymmetrical threats, such as from chemical and biological weapons. He said, "What we have to do is intensify our anti-proliferation types of measures to cut down on the technology that so many of our friends or allies or adversaries are helping to spread around the world." He also said the US deploys troops abroad to promote stability."

"Cohen Says "Superpower" Label Attracts Asymmetrical Threats"

Security

1. Asia-Pacific

Admiral Dennis Blair, Commander in Chief of the US Navy's US Pacific Command, writes that Asia will have genuine security only when nations share expectations of peaceful change and act together to address common issues. Blair argues that interdependence, and therefore long-term security, result from the increased financial and economic interactions facilitated by technology. He concludes that states in Asia must channel their energies beyond a "balance of power" approach by focusing on joint problems by contributing to UN-mandated operations, humanitarian operations, and joint training.

"The Role of Armed Forces in Regional Security Cooperation"

2. PRC Military Policy

Andrew Scobell, of the Strategic Studies Institute at the US Army War College, assesses the political and economic determinants of the PRC's effort to modernize its armed forces and the factors that will determine the selection of a strategy are examined. While the PRC is adamantly opposed to a TMD for Taiwan, the PRC must be reminded about the destabilizing and threatening effect of its recent missile buildup.

"Chinese Army Building in the Era of Jiang Zemin"

3. Russian Foreign Policy

The Acronym Institute published sections of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation." It said Russia will seek a multi-polar system of international relations because of its varied interests, which include military-political rivalries among regional powers, and the growth of separatism, ethnic-national and religious extremism. Russia calls for the enhancement of strategic and regional stability through arms control, nuclear force reductions, nonproliferation agreements, nonintervention in state's sovereign matters, and increased cooperation between Russia and NATO and Russia and the US."

"Russian Foreign Policy Concept"

Military

1. Russian Military

Russian President Vladimir Putin offered pay raises and higher pensions to the nuclear sector. Putin appears loath to scale back military commitments admit Russia may have too many military commitments for the post-Cold War order and many Russians feel the same way.

"Putin Ups Nuclear Sector Money After Sub Tragedy"

2. US Submarine Fleet

In the aftermath of the sinking of the Russian nuclear submarine Kursk, military analyst William Arkin reviewed plans to increase the US attack submarine fleet by more than 27 percent over the next 25 years. The navy claims that it needs the many submarines to keep up with all the "requirements" of the regional commands, but Arkin asked whether these requirements are genuine or concocted to justify existing and future submarines.

"U.S. Navy Hopes Sink With Kursk?"

3. UK Submarine Accident

After rumors that a British nuclear submarine recently underwent reactor repairs at Gibraltar, British and Spanish officials confirmed on August 29 that the attack submarine HMS Tireless broke off operations near Sicily on May 12 after it developed a hairline crack in its reactor coolant system. Although the Gibraltar base is not authorized to perform nuclear reactor repairs, the Royal Navy said it took the "exceptional" step of repairing the Tireless in Gibraltar because they considered it safer than taking it to Devonport or Faslane in England. The article "Spanish Daily Says UK Promised No Nuclear Sub Repair in Gibraltar" is available from

4. Nuclear Submarine Non-Proliferation

James Clay Moltz, associate director of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, reports that Brazil, India, Pakistan, and the PRC are all seeking to expand their nuclear submarine fleets because of the example created by the US and Russia. He argues that sub-manufacturing states should to a ban on the sale or transfer of nuclear subs and their propulsion technology, they should discuss an agreement to facilitate the exchange of information in the case of future accidents, and should include the enriched uranium fuel used in submarines in a global treaty to ban the production of fissile materials.

"The Kursk Was In Dangerous Company"

Jon B. Wolfsthal, writing in the Christian Science Monitor, argued that keeping US missile subs at sea in a Cold War posture forces Russia to keep its attack subs out there looking for US subs, and encourages Russia to keep as many strategic missile subs at sea as possible. The US and Russia should bilaterally decide that ballistic missile subs will no longer go on routine patrol and the US could help Russia dismantle its excess subs as an incentive for Russia to agree. The benefits to the US and Russian budgets would be significant, as would be the benefits to global security.

"The Message Implicit in Kursk Disaster"

Commenting on the Russian submarine disaster, Joshua Handler, a doctoral student in the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, wrote that Russia is unsuccessfully trying to run a first-world navy on a third-world budget. US submarines spying in the middle of Russian naval exercises, and the Russia Navy's deployment of submarines for prestige and to counter the Western presence, must be curtailed and replaced by cooperative arrangements and exercises, Handler argued.

"Cold War Games, Dangerously Old"

Clifford Gaddy and Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution wrote in the San Diego Union-Tribune that most Americans don't realize how great Russian distrust is toward the US and its allies. They suggest that rather than calling for unilateral Russian disarmament, the US should cut its nuclear forces, unilaterally at first, down to levels envisioned by arms control treaties and which are already assumed in US military planning.

"The Kursk and its lessons for the next U.S. president"

5. Announcements

Ten years after Iraq invaded Kuwait and triggered an international coalition to liberate the small oil state, Stars and Stripes has launched a special website: the Secret History of the Gulf War. Researched and written by leading military analyst and Washington Post columnist William M. Arkin, the website provides a detailed account and analysis of the conflict in the Persian Gulf.

"Gulf War Anniversary: Going Behind the Headlines"

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