

NAPSNET Weekly FLASH Update 7 February, 2000

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNET Weekly FLASH Update 7 February, 2000", NAPSNet Weekly Report, February 07, 2000, <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-weekly/napsnet-weekly-flash-update-7-february-2000/>

Arms Control

1. US-Russia Talks

Following talks with Russia's acting president Vladimir Putin, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said that she was "encouraged" by the discussion on arms control and that Putin demonstrated "some seeming flexibility on deep cuts." She said that Putin did talk about deep cuts but that "we never talked about numbers or any details of START III." Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said that both sides appraised the results of the talks as "highly positive."

"Albright-Putin Talks Called 'Highly Positive'"

"Secretary Albright Talks About Meeting With Putin."

2. Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Wednesday urged Russia to agree to "modest" changes to the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) disarmament treaty to protect both countries from new nuclear powers. Alexei Arbatov, deputy chairman of the Russian Duma's defense committee, said that he could envisage a compromise on the Anti-Ballistic Treaty (ABM) that would probably include a steep cut in the limits on strategic warheads, coupled with an end to the ban on MIRV's (Multiple Independently-targeted Re-entry Vehicles).

"Albright Urges Russia to Allow Changes to ABM Treaty"

"Russian Liberal Foresees ABM Compromise"

3. Russian Nuclear Material

A bipartisan group of US foreign policy experts warned that US efforts to keep Russia's nuclear weapons materiel away from rogue nations or terrorists may fail without increased government money and attention. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director George Tenet told during a February 3 Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Threats to US National Security that the United States will be concerned about the security of Russian nuclear weapons and associated materials, regardless of the political path Russia chooses. Clinton administration and Russian officials said that Russia has promised to stop making plutonium out of fuel from its civilian power reactors as part of a \$100 million joint research and aid package from the United States. In the wake of the agreement, Greenpeace said that the UK and French governments should also abandon any further plutonium reprocessing.

"US Urged To Closely Eye Russia Nukes"

"Tenet Says Russian Safeguarding of Nuclear Materials is a Concern"

"Moscow Takes Step to Ease U.S. Fears on Plutonium Use"

"Pressure on UK And French Governments to End Nuclear Reprocessing After U.S. Deal To End Plutonium Extraction In Russia"

Nuclear Proliferation

4. South Asian Nuclear Weapons

Senior Analyst Nicholas Berry at the Center for Defense Information argues that the United States and China should reassess their unwillingness to recognize India and Pakistan as nuclear weapons states.

"It is Time to Let India and Pakistan Enter the Nuclear Club - 'Officially'"

5. Israeli Nuclear Weapons

The Israeli parliament on February 2 debated the country's nuclear weapons program in a 45-minute session. Issam Mahoul, who had appealed to the Supreme Court to force the debate, said that Israel has hundreds of nuclear warheads. Cabinet Minister Haim Ramon said he could not respond in detail to Mahoul's allegations as "To do so would aid the enemy."

"Israel's parliament holds unprecedented debate on nuclear arms."

6. South African Nuclear Program

Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Horton III discusses the impact of key South African leaders on the successful development and subsequent rollback of South Africa's nuclear weapons capability. He argues that the decision to abandon the nuclear weapons option was not US nonproliferation measures, but South African national interests.

"Out Of (South) Africa: Pretoria's Nuclear Weapons Experience"

Missile Defense

7. Missile Threat to US

The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, George Tenet, in testimony on February 2 before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said that threats to the US are growing from weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Tenet warned that "over the next 15 years ... our cities will face ballistic missile threats from ... North Korea, probably Iran, and possibly Iraq."
"CIA Director on Ballistic Missile Threats to United States"

8. US Missile Defense

Stephen Young of the Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers argues that Peter Rodman's article last week on "The Coming Brawl With Europe Over Missile Defense" greatly misreads or misrepresents the real debate over national missile defense, both in the US and in Europe.
"The Brawl over Missile Defense"
"European Views of US Missile Defense" (NPP v2n3)

NATO

9. NATO Strategic Concept

US Ambassador to NATO Alexander Vershbow on January 27 discussed NATO's new Strategic Concept to an audience at the Geneva Center for Security Policy. Vershbow said that the concept is vitally important to the security and stability of both Europe and the United States. The White House released on January 31 the text of a letter President Clinton has sent to the U.S. Congress certifying that "the new NATO Strategic Concept imposes no new commitment or obligation on the United States." US Defense Secretary William Cohen spoke at the Munich Security Policy Conference on February 5 about US and NATO security issues.
"US NATO Ambassador Talks About NATO Strategic Concept."
"Clinton Assures Congress: No New Commitments In NATO Strategic Concept."
"Text: Defense Secretary Cohen at Munich Security Policy Conference Feb.5"

Taiwan Straits

10. Taiwan Security Enhancement Act

Greg May, the Nixon Center Assistant Director and Research Associate in Chinese Studies, says that the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act (TSEA) worsens an already tense situation in the Taiwan Straits without actually doing anything substantial to "enhance" Taiwan's security. Cheng-yi Lin, a Research Fellow at the Institute of European and American Studies of Academia Sinica in Taiwan, notes that Taiwan is the only one of the major recipients of US military equipment that does not maintain diplomatic relations with the US. Lin argues that even with the passage of the TSEA, the relationship between the US and Taiwan will not reach the level of a military alliance. An editorial in Taiwan News argues that the TSEA would make up for deficiencies in the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act.

"REALITY CHECK: House Enhances Tensions, Not Taiwan's Security"

"TSEA: A Stabilizing Factor in the Taiwan Strait"

"TSEA is a Right Step"

Stratfor argues that the US government is trying to postpone the settlement of both the issues of military sales to Taiwan and Normal Trade Relations for the PRC until Taiwan's presidential campaign ends next month, in order to avert a crisis similar to the one in 1996.

"Washington Tries to Keep the Two Chinas in Check"

Military Policy

11. US Military Exercises

William Arkin reports that the US military is conducting hundreds of secret exercises with militaries and police forces and intelligence agencies overseas. Arkin maintains that ""Such operations, by their very existence, suggest covert commitments to foreign countries undertaken for the benefit of access to military bases or exchanges of information or 'training' opportunities."

"Secrets That Make a Foreign Policy."

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