NAPSNET Weekly FLASH Update 7 January, 2001

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNET Weekly FLASH Update 7 January, 2001", NAPSNet Weekly Report, January 07, 2001, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-weekly/napsnet-weekly-flash-update-7-january-2001/

Nuclear Weapons

1. Russian Missile Deployment
The Russian Military News Agency reported that the third regiment of the Russian Strategic Missile Forces' RS-12M2 Topol-M silo-based missiles became operational. SMF Commander Vladimir Yakovlev said that three Topol-M regiments were successfully deployed by the end of 2000.
"Third Topol-M Regiment Becomes Operational"
David Hoffman, writing for the Washington Post Foreign Service, argues that Russia's recent deployment of only six Topol-M missiles, compared to ten in 1998 and 1999, suggests a shift in priorities under President Vladimir Putin. The cutback appears to be not only a response to budget pressures, but a change in priorities as well. Alexander Pikayev, a nonproliferation and arms control specialist at the Carnegie Moscow Center, said that the reduced deployment marks a possible shift from a nuclear deterrent force toward conventional forces. The single-warhead, silo-based Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missile was designed to replace the aging Soviet-era multiple-warhead missiles in Russia's arsenal.
"Shift Seen in Russian Nuclear Policy"

2. Russian Tactical Nuke Deployment

Bill Gertz reported in the Washington Times that Russia is moving unknown types of tactical nuclear weapons into the Baltic Sea port of Kaliningrad, a major military base for Russian ground forces and headquarters of the Russian Navy's Baltic Fleet, in an apparent effort to step up military pressure on the expanded NATO alliance. Gertz stated that the transfers to Kaliningrad followed threats several years ago to position such weapons outside of Russia's territory in response to expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Soviet and Russian governments announced in 1991 and 1992, respectively, that all tactical nuclear weapons were removed from Eastern Europe, but it was not clear whether that included those based in Kaliningrad. Clinton administration arms-control officials suggested that this may be an attempt by Russia to test the incoming administration of President-elect George W. Bush. Gertz also reported that while US officials had not yet discussed with Russia the veracity the reports, they intended to do so. Officials in the US and Baltic countries independently stated that the reports had not been confirmed, but that, if true, the situation would be alarming.

"Russia transfers nuclear arms to Baltics"

"U.S. yet to query Moscow on nukes"

Anatoly Lobsky, assistant to the commander of the Russian Navy's Baltic Fleet, denied the report in the Washington Times and said that Russia is unconditionally fulfilling its pledge to keep the Baltics a nuclear-free zone. US officials said that some weapons may have been in Kaliningrad a year or longer, but would not discuss numbers or specific types of Russian weapons there. The transfer may reflect Russia's response to NATO's plans for further eastern expansion. US administration officials have stated that Russia may be trying to raise diplomatic pressure on the US to withdraw its remaining nuclear weapons from Europe, or that Russia may be transferring the tactical nuclear weapons because its conventional forces are weak and Moscow has acknowledged its deterrence strength may have to rely more heavily on nuclear forces. Defense officials said they were probably for use on a new short-range missile known as the Toka which was test-fired on April 18 in Kaliningrad and has a range of about 44 miles (70 km).

"U.S.: Russia Moved Weapons"

"U.S.: Russia Moved Nuclear Weapons Into Kaliningrad"

---

3. Russian ICBM Test

Spokesman for the Russian Northern Fleet, Igor Degalo, stated that an intercontinental ballistic missile was successfully test-launched by the Novomoskovsk in the Barents Sea and successfully hit its target in Kamchatka. This was the first such test since the Kursk nuclear submarine disaster last summer.

"Russia Launches ICBM From Barents Sea"

---

4. Iraqi Nuclear Program

Salman Yassin Zweir, an engineer who was said to have spent 13 years working for the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC), was quoted as saying that Iraqi scientists resumed work on building an atomic bomb in August 1998, four months before Iraqi President Saddam Hussein expelled UN inspectors from Iraq.

"Saddam building A-bomb: Report"

5. French Nuclear Program
The French defense ministry said it had signed a US$215 million contract with Aerospatiale Matra Missiles, a subsidiary of the European aerospace group EADS, for the initial development and purchase of medium-range nuclear missiles to be carried by Mirage 2000 and Super-Etendard strike aircraft. The ministry said that the new missiles will cost about 20 percent less than existing ASMP missiles but will perform better and in more adverse conditions.
"France orders stand-off nuclear missiles"

Security

1. India Nuclear Policy
Although the Indian government has repeatedly stated that it won't be the first nation to use nuclear weapons, India's air force, in an internal document, advocates the creation of a Nuclear Air Command that would wield a "first strike capability," according to an Indian defense official. The official said that the Air Force calls for the new command and capability in a paper called "Vision 2020," which was presented to Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee in mid-November.
The article "Indian Air Force Advocates 'First Strike Capability'" is available from Defense News

2. South Asia Nuclear Lists
India and Pakistan exchanged lists of their nuclear sites as part of an annual practice following an agreement signed by the two countries prohibiting attacks on each other's nuclear installations. The lists were first exchanged in January, 1992, and have been exchanged every year since.
"Pakistan And India Swap Nuclear Target Lists"
"Pakistan and India swap Nuclear facilities' lists"
"India, Pak exchange lists of N-plants"

Proliferation

1. Russia-Iran Military Trade

Iran and Russia said they had agreed on broad military cooperation and declared that a 1995 Russia-US deal that prevented Russia from selling conventional arms to Iran was effectively dead. Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev said, "It was agreed that a new phase of military and technical cooperation would begin between the two sides." Iranian counterpart Ali Shamkhani said that Iran and Russia did not discuss sales of specific military hardware during Sergeyev's three-day visit but said that they shared a common security viewpoint because of NATO expansion, the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan and increased Western influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

"Iran and Russia ink military cooperation deal"

Brenda Shaffer writes in the International Herald Tribune that the US may be able to convince Russia to refrain from providing Iran with certain technologies most directly applicable to nuclear weapons, but it is it is naive to suppose that Russia will cut off its broader military and nuclear cooperation in response to US pressure. Shaffer argues that the reasons for this include the potential economic benefits for Russia and because Iran has refrained from creating additional problems for Russia with its Muslim populations.

"Washington Cannot Stop Russian Nuclear Deals With Tehran"

Missile Defense

1. Rumsfeld Nomination

Donald Rumsfeld, a former Secretary of Defense in the Ford administration, has been selected by President-elect George W. Bush to serve as his Secretary of Defense. In statements immediately following his nomination, Rumsfeld made clear he considered the US to be increasingly vulnerable to ballistic missile attack from countries including the DPRK, Iran and Iraq. It was reported that Bush said he wanted Rumsfeld to "make sure that the missile defense receives the priority we think it must receive in future Pentagon budgets." Referring to opposition among Democrats in the divided Congress being sworn in next week, Bush said, "there's a selling job to do there."

"Analysis: Bush's Pentagon Choice Moves 'Star Wars' Closer"

John Isaacs, President of the Council for a Livable World, said, "Donald Rumsfeld is a dyed-i--the-wool hawk. He's been one of the high priests of national missile defense and a consistent opponent of arms control measures." Isaacs also said, "He opposed the 1979 SALT II nuclear arms treaty and testified before Congress that the Chemical Weapons Convention ... was 'ineffective and unverifiable'. He also opposed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty."

"Blast From the Past: President-elect Bush Taps Ford's SecDef to Head the Pentagon"

Analysts are reporting that Rumsfeld's nomination as Secretary of Defense will raise pressure on Russia to reach a compromise on the US plan to deploy anti-missile defenses. Referring to a report completed by a commission led by Rumsfeld on missile threats facing the US, Ivan Safranchuk, an arms control analyst at PIR-Center in Moscow, said "The report by Rumsfeld's commission has stoked the Americans' desire to have anti-missile defenses, so his appointment isn't going to make life easier for the Russians." He and other analysts predicted that Moscow would eventually have to abandon its staunch resistance to any changes in the ABM Treaty, and would bargain for concessions from the United States in exchange for an agreement to modify it.

"Russia Mulls Rumsfeld Missile Plan"

2. Russia-US Talks
Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said Russia was not ready to agree to a proposed US NMD system supported by US President-elect George W. Bush but said that Russia would keep talking with the US on despite disagreements and would aim for a ''serious dialogue'' with the new US administration. In an article published in the Nezavisimaya Gazeta daily, Ivanov wrote, "We intend without delay to start a serious dialogue with the new American administration on the entire range of disarmament issues, including the retention of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM)." Russian President Vladimir Putin has vowed to scrap all disarmament accords with the US if it deploys NMD, but some military commentators believe Russia will shift its stance if Bush does not back down.
"Russia to Keep Talking with U.S. on Missile Shield"

---

3. Commentary on Rapid Deployment
James M. Lindsay and Michael E. O'Hanlon, both Senior Fellows at Brookings Institution's Foreign Policy Studies group, published an article in the International Herald Tribune in which they report that advisors to President-elect George W. Bush are pushing Bush to agree to a rapid deployment of the proposed NMD system in order to overcome potential political problems. Lindsay and O'Hanlon argue, however, that doing so could leave the US with a mediocre missile defense, strained relations with most European allies, and major problems with Russia and the PRC. They further argue that there are potential advantages to delaying deployment, as long as most threats are years away, including the chance to renegotiate the 1972 ABM treaty, develop better ballistic missile defense technologies, and find ways to include our allies under the system.
"Rapid Deployment On Missile Defense Is A Bad Idea"

---

4. Gulf Cooperation Council
Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates signed the Gulf region's first defense pact, pledging to come to each other's aid in the event of attack. The six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also discussed an early warning and a missile defense system for possible missiles fired from Iraq or Iran, which the US has proposed for the region and that could identify chemical or biological agents involved in an attack. The group also made statements on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, oil production targets, and Iraq-related issues.
"Six Gulf Nations Sign Defense Pact"

Military

---

1. US Missile Programs
Orbital Sciences Corporation announced that it was awarded a contract by the US Naval Sea Systems Command to study concepts and cost projections for the development and deployment of an Advanced Land Attack Missile (ALAM) system to be used aboard the Navy's DD 21 Zumwalt-class Land Attack Destroyer. The ALAM system will offer the US Navy the capabilities required for its evolving Land Attack/Littoral warfare needs.
"Orbital Wins U.S. Navy Contract to Study Advanced Land Attack Missile Concept"

2. Russian Navy
In an article in the current issue of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Cristina Chuen, a research associate at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, and Michael Jasinsk, a former arms control inspector, write that the Russian navy is in trouble because of aging boats, sporadic funding, and demoralized personnel. The Kursk disaster, where the crew had it better than most crews, raises questions about the situation on less active and decommissioned boats that have no sponsors. They argue that there are real threats of another accident and that it was only chance that the Kursk tragedy did not involve a nuclear weapon.
"Russia's blue water blues"
(return to top)

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-weekly/napsnet-weekly-flash-update-7-january-2001/

Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org