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Missile Defense

1. US Missile Defense Test

The Ballistic Missile Defense Organization's (BMDO) National Missile Defense (NMD) Joint Program Office announced that it has scheduled the third NMD intercept flight test for July 7, 2000. This will be the first full system test of the prototype NMD system, using current versions of all the elements representing each part of a future operational system: space-based early warning sensor; ground-based early warning, tracking and discrimination radars; battle management, command, control and communication; in-flight communication system and the interceptor missile and kill vehicle.

"Next National Missile Defense Flight Test Scheduled"

During a US Department of Defense press briefing, Jacques Gansler, Undersecretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, and Lieutenant General Ronald Kadish, Director of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, outlined the background for the upcoming missile defense system test.

"Pentagon Briefing on National Missile Defense Program"

"Text-only version"

2. US Missile Defense Plans

Six experts convened by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, equally divided between proponents and opponents of missile defense, agreed that US President Clinton's plan for a limited missile defense would not work. Mary McGrory noted, "No one either at the US Defense Department or Carnegie mentioned that the system also may be unnecessary." "More Missile Madness"

The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), led by Ted Postol, a missile expert from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, criticizes the feasibility of national missile defense (NMD). They contend that it is impossible to acquire enough data to differentiate a real warhead from a decoy, such as an aluminium-coated mylar balloon. Jacques Gansler, the US Department of Defense's acquisition chief, testified to the House Armed Services Committee last week that NMD critics simply lack the information to judge the system as technically unfeasible. An unclassified summary of a DOD report by the National Missile Defense Independent Review Team concluded the NMD could defend against missiles with simple countermeasures. The DOD said it is classified how the system could do this.

"US DoD assails NMD critics"

Members of the Henry L. Stimson Working Group on Theater Missile Defenses (TMD) all agreed that policy options for Theater Missile Defense should not be driven by ideological constructs, and neither should they be driven by technological optimism. The Working Group's deliberations have considered that US policy choices toward TMD must be aware of the problems associated with missile defense deployments, but they must also be responsive to the growing ballistic missile threats in the Asia-Pacific region. The Working Group recommends the deployment of TMD systems with US forward-deployed forces.

"Theater Missile Defenses in the Asia-Pacific Region"

Spurgeon M. Keeny, Jr. writes in Arms Control Today that US Presidential candidate George W. Bush's proposed missile defense system would be perceived as negating even a substantially expanded Chinese deterrent and providing at least the base for a defense that would challenge Russia's ability to maintain a survivable deterrent. Keeny writes, "Bush's perspective on the US nuclear arsenal is conducive to domestic bipartisan support for the overall reduction of nuclear forces, but there would appear to be little prospect that such an unregulated and unverified process of unilateral reductions would get very far, particularly in the shadow of a major US NMD program that would inhibit Russian reciprocation."

"A World Without Arms Control"

3. Russian Response to Missile Defense

The Moscow summit of Commonwealth of Independent States countries issued a statement on international stability that called for preserving the ABM treaty "through its strict and full compliance." The leaders said that any dilution of the aims and provisions of the current ABM treaty "would undermine global strategic stability and steps to further reduce the stockpiles of strategic nuclear weapons." Russia's commander of the Strategic Missile Force, Vladimir Yakovlev, warned that Russia might re-equip its Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles with multiple warheads if the United States went ahead with deployment of a National Missile Defense System. Russia might also break out of the Intermediate Range Forces (INF) treaty, Yakovlev said, by either redeploying new types of missiles or shortening the range of long-range missiles.

This article is available from World News Connection

"Russia can be drawn into a ruinous arms race"

The US has no clear idea of the proposed Russian alternative to its national missile defense plans. In early June, Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed an alternate plan that he claims would not break the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, but details of the plan have not been released, and Russian officials said little new about the proposal during three days of talks with US defense officials in Moscow.

"Russian Plans on Treaty Unclear"

4. Justification for US Missile Defense

Some Russian generals have gone back to claiming that the ballistic missile threat is not as urgent as the United States insists. Leonid Ivashov, the head of a small Defense Ministry department, wrote in an essay in the military newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda that, "When estimating the threat of missile strikes, the Americans give priority to ... technological ability of this state or another to build missiles. Meanwhile, there is a complete absence of evaluation of the motivation" for those states to use such missiles.

"Russian Generals Diverge From Putin-Clinton Stance on Missile Threat"

Leon V. Sigal writes that the US could negotiate with the DPRK to eliminate a missile threat long before the US could develop a missile defense system. To negotiate an end to the DPRK's missile threat, the US and the DPRK need to set political relations on a new course by declaring an end to enmity. As a practical step toward that end, the United States should call off its economic embargo now. In return, the DPRK would agree in writing to a formal moratorium on missile testing as a first step toward a comprehensive ban.

"Negotiating an End to North Korea's Missile-Making"

5. British Role in Missile Defense

Basic notes that the UK must soon make a choice on the future of its Fylingdales radar facility in Yorkshire. The location is crucial to a workable US NMD network, but the required software upgrades for the interceptors and the installation of a new X-band radar would both violate the ABM treaty. BASIC Research Director Theresa Hitchens said.

"Nmd: Uk Must Decide"

Nuclear Weapons

6. Russian Nuclear Arsenal

The commander of the Russian Strategic Missile Troops [RSMT], Colonel-General Vladimir Yakovlev, told reporters that Russia's "nuclear triad" of land, naval and air forces were ready to be unified under one command, but that the Balkan war and the Chechnyan conflict had delayed the move. The United States united its nuclear triad under one command in 1992.

"Russian Missile Commander Hints at Unification of Nuclear Forces"

Russia formally approved the Topol-M ICBM in April, authorizing deployment of the full planned contingent of Russia's most sophisticated nuclear missile. Russian defense officials expect the new missile to form the core of Russia's strategic nuclear force by the end of the decade. The missile is slated to replace all of Russia's existing land-based nuclear-armed strategic missiles.

The article "Russia Approves Topol-M; Warns Missile Could Defeat U.S. Defense" is available from World News Connection

Igor Khripunov writes in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists that Russia's Strategic Rocket Force is the mainstay of its deterrent. Given the delays in START II ratification and implementation, most of Russia's missile systems falling under that treaty are either close to the end of their service lives or well beyond them. Rocket force leaders have been developing and implementing a long-term survival strategy: extending the life of existing systems; shifting priorities as needed; commercialization; and staying flexible enough to adapt to changing international realities.

"Last Leg of the Triad"

7. PRC Nuclear Arsenal

Robert A. Manning, Ronald Montaperto, and Brad Roberts write that the PRC has historically not been a major factor in the US nuclear strategy, but today the PRC is the only one of the five declared nuclear weapons states to be expanding its arsenal. This report from a roundtable sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, National Defense University, and the Institute for Defense Analysis focuses on the PRC's current nuclear deployments, the status of its nuclear modernization efforts, and its current doctrinal debates, and then poses questions about the impact of the PRC nuclear program on US and other arms control efforts and missile defenses.

"China, Nuclear Weapons, and Arms Control"

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) has a report on the effect of PRC nuclear modernization on US security. The report argues, "The net threat China poses to the US probably will be larger if the US deploys an NMD system than if the US did not. At the same time, China seems likely to increase its ICBM, SLBM, and cruise missile threat against the US in any case."

"National Missile Defenses and Chinese Nuclear Modernization"

8. Israeli Nuclear Arsenal

Reuven Pedatzur writes in the Ha'aretz that the British Sunday Times, quoting Israeli security sources, reported that the Israeli navy launched a cruise missile in the Indian Ocean from a submarine to a range of about 1,500 kilometers. According to the report, the cruise missile is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead as well. The report focuses attention a strategy currently being developed by the Israel Defense Forces that emphasizes the need to build a strategic deterrence potential against countries such as Iran and Iraq. Pedatzur argues that Israel probably has completed the construction of the classic "deterrence triangle" of land, air, and sea-based missiles.

"Completing the Deterrence Triangle"

9. Nuclear Proliferation

William C. Potter and Jonathan B. Tucker write that the US is partly responsible for recent attacks on arms control as it has undermined the nuclear nonproliferation system by discounting the adverse effects of NATO enlargement, waiving tough economic sanctions against India and Pakistan, postponing a Senate vote on ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and ignoring the steps that must be taken to protect the NPT. They argue that the US must narrow the gap between its statements about the dangers of the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and its investment of political capital in strengthening nonproliferation treaties, institutions and relationships.

"Weapons Spreading"

Missiles

10. Pakistan Missile Development

Pakistan said that it will not respond to India's latest test of the short-range Prithvi surface-to-surface missile, but accused India of violating a bilateral understanding by not giving prior warning about the test of the air-version of its Prithvi (Earth) missile. "No advance notice was given to Pakistan," a spokesman said, adding that Pakistan had honored the agreement when it tested its own missiles.

The article "Pakistan To Hold Fire After Indian Missile Test" is available from World News Connection

A senior US military official said that the PRC is continuing to help Pakistan build long-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Joe Cirincione of the Carnegie Endowment For Peace stated, "They've promised not to export complete missiles, and apparently they're not, but they are doing the next worst thing, which is helping the Pakistanis manufacture their own missiles."

"Secret Supplier"

Nuclear Materials

11. Nuclear Reprocessing

A Greenpeace press release announced that the UK and France were isolated by a decision calling for an end to nuclear reprocessing and the implementation of dry storage at the annual meeting of the OSPAR Convention, in Copenhagen. Greenpeace International Political Director Remi Parmentier said: "This is a decisive moment with far reaching consequences, never before has such a strong message been sent by so many countries calling for an end to reprocessing."

"North East Atlantic Countries Call On Uk And France To End Nuclear Reprocessing"

12. Russian Nuclear Waste Storage

The Russian Kurchatov Institute is pushing a project to build a radioactive waste storage site at Simushir Island, one of the Kuril Islands in the Russian Far East, where it says it will only store its own waste. However, documents reveal that negotiations have been conducted behind the scenes with potential clients from Taiwan. Russian legislation might be amended in September to allow imports of both spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste into the country.

"Russia to become radwaste business land"

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