

NAPSNET Weekly FLASH Update 7 March, 2000

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Arms Control

1. US-Russian Arms Talks

John Holum, senior arms adviser at the US State Department, on Thursday ended three days of talks with his Russian counterpart Yuri Kapralov. Diplomatic sources said that Holum was thought to have pressed for US proposals to modify the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, but the Russian Foreign Ministry said earlier that it had ruled out any such discussions and linked preservation of the agreement to the conclusion of other treaties. An unnamed Russian foreign ministry official who took part in the talks said on Sunday that Russia is trying to show the US that there are alternatives to changing the treaty.

"Russia And U.S. Arms Officials Finish ABM Talks"

"Russia Rejects Changes In ABM Treaty"

"Missile Shield Would Unravel Arms Pact, Claims Russia"

Missile Defense

2. US Missile Defense

In a confidential memo to Defense Secretary William S. Cohen, US Navy chief Admiral Jay Johnson argued for including a naval component to the proposed antimissile system. John Isaacs, President of the Council for a livable world, said that while US President Bill Clinton may feel that he has to support deployment of a National Missile Defense system in an election year, recent polling data show that the US public is not overly supportive of missile defense. Isaacs argues, "an appreciation of how the American people feel about missile defense could make it easier for Clinton to accept arguments critical of NMD and delay a deployment decision until the next administration."

"Navy Chief Promotes Missile Defense Role"

"'Go Slow': The People Speak on Missile Defense"

3. US-Norway Radar System

Norwegian Defense Minister Eldbjørg Loewer said that the US-built Globus-2 radar station being installed in northern Norway does not violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, will not be used for anti-missile defense, and poses no threat to Russia. He added that the radar will be placed entirely under Norwegian control and operated by Norwegian personnel. Denmark said earlier that it would not permit use of a base in Greenland for an anti-missile system if Russia objected.

"Radar No Threat To Russia, Says Norway"

"Nordic rumblings presage European dilemma on US missile defense plan"

4. PRC View of Theater Missile Defense

Greg May of the Nixon Center argues that the PRC's objections to Theater Missile Defense have little to do with whether the system will actually succeed in shooting down missiles.

"Rather, China objects to TMD because it would integrate Taiwan into the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance, it further elevates the role of Japan in regional security, and it signals America's intention to strengthen its military presence in the region and prevent China's emergence as the predominant regional leader."

"China's Opposition to TMD Is More About Politics Than Missiles"

5. Israeli Missile Defense System

Jane's reports that Israel is looking for a US partner to co-produce the Arrow anti-missile defense system. The next step, following a co-production agreement, would be a US government decision whether to allow the US company to take the lead in marketing the system to allies.

"Israel seeks US partner for Arrow"

Proliferation

6. Iran Sanctions Bill

The US Congress approved a bill aimed at punishing Russia and other nations deemed to be aiding Iran's efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction. The measure authorizes, but does not require, the president to impose sanctions or cut US military aid to entities transferring materials that Iran could use to develop nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons or missile technology. The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement, "We must state with sorrow that American lawmakers are again artificially aggravating the situation, trying to make internal legislation extraterritorial and putting pressure on other nations under clearly forced pretexts."

"US House set to pass Iran non-proliferation bill"

"Russia Rebukes U.S. Over Iran Bill"

"Moscow Blasts Senate's Iran Nuclear Bill"

7. Asian WMD Development

Richard Halloran writes that many Asian nations are moving past the weapons modernization stage of military evolution into weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

"Destroyer of Worlds: The Proliferation of WMD in Asia"

Military

8. PRC Military Strategy

The National Defense University has a report on recent writing by Chinese authors on the future of the PRC military. The complete report is available online.

"Chinese Views of Future Warfare"

Diplomacy

9. PRC-Russian Relations

Stratfor notes that the PRC's state-run People's Daily on March 2 ran several articles touting the benefits of strategic partnership between Russia and the PRC. It said that the timing of the state press coverage suggests that there has been a breakthrough in PRC-Russian talks, and it appears that a more vigorous strategic partnership between Russia and the PRC is beginning to take shape. The PRC's official People's Daily said on Saturday that Russia has agreed to supply the PRC with nuclear fuel for the Tianwan nuclear power plant, which is currently under construction.

"In Beijing, The Signs of a New Strategic Partnership"

"Russia To Supply Nuclear Fuel To China"

10. US-Russian Relations

Mikhail Pogorely, editor of the Nuclear Security bulletin published by the National Press Institute in Moscow, said that the US is seeking to improve relations with Russia for two reasons: to forward arms control agreements, and to boost Vice President Al Gore's chances in the upcoming presidential election.

"A Pragmatic Approach to U.S. - Russian Relations"

Taiwan Straits

11. PRC White Paper on Taiwan

The Mainland Affairs Council of the Executive Yuan of Taiwan issued an official statement in response to the PRC's recent white paper. The statement says that the policy of the Taiwan government has consistently been based on the respect for separate rule of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, and that the government has gradually promoted the normalization of cross-Strait relations in order to maintain the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait and enhance cross-Strait reconciliation step by step.

"Statement on mainland China's White Paper"

12. PRC Threat to Taiwan

Harvey Sicherman, Ph.D., President of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, writes that the PRC has developed "the three ifs," conditions that would trigger PRC military action against Taiwan. Sicherman says that these conditions are worth analyzing to see "whether they represent something new rather than just something provocative."

"China's Three Ifs "

13. Taiwan Elections

The Asia Society has a comprehensive webpage on the upcoming presidential election in Taiwan. It states, "Since one of the key issues at stake concerns the already tense cross-Strait relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC), the identity of the winning party could have a significant impact on the stability of East Asia. The outcome of the election, hence, is of major concern to both the PRC and the United States (albeit in rather different regards)." The 2000 Taiwan Presidential Elections.

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