

NPP Weekly FLASH Update, February 14, 2000

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Ballistic Missiles

1. Missile Threat to US

Robert D Walpole, CIA National Intelligence Officer for Strategic and Nuclear Programs, testified before the Senate Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation, and Federal Services, on February 9, 2000 on the ballistic missile threat to the US. Joseph Cirincione, Director, Nonproliferation Project, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, questions whether the threat of ballistic missile attack on the US is really growing. He argues that while the threat is certainly changing, and is increasing by some measures, by several other important criteria, it is significantly smaller than it was in the mid-1980s.

"The Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States"

"Assessing the Ballistic Missile Threat"

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2. DPRK Missile Program

The Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies published a paper by Joseph S. Bermudez Jr. detailing the history of the DPRK's ballistic missile program. The paper is available on the website in both html and pdf version, and print copies can also be ordered via the website.

"A History of Ballistic Missile Development in the DPRK"

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Missile Defense

3. US Missile Defense

The US Department of Defense has presented a budget for Fiscal Year 2001 (October 2000 to September 2001) that would allow work on deployment of a national missile defense to commence in 2001. The British-American Security Information Council evaluates the budget.

["Pentagon Budgets Projected to Make 'Son of Star Wars' Operational by 2005"](#)

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4. Missile Defense for Europe

Great Britain has asked the US for the first time to consider protecting Europe as well if the US goes ahead with building a national anti-ballistic missile defense system. British Defense Secretary Geoffrey Hoon raised the issue with US Secretary of Defense William Cohen during a visit to Washington at the end of last week.

["Britain asks US to widen defence system"](#)

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5. Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Moscow-based Council on Foreign and Defense Policy released the two-part study, "U.S.-Russian Relations at the Turn of the Century," which examines the state of U.S.-Russian relations and prescribes policy recommendations to improve the relationship. Among its recommendations, the report says that the US should consider granting Russia the right to maintain a multi-warhead capability on some of its long-range missiles as part of a package deal to amend the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and break through the current deadlock on arms control.

"U.S.-Russian Relations at the Turn of the Century"

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Nonproliferation

6. US-Russia Nuclear Fuel Agreement

The Clinton administration called on February 7 for a major expansion of its nuclear nonproliferation programs in Russia in return for a Russian promise to stop producing plutonium from the spent fuel of civilian nuclear reactors. It marks the first time that the United States has attempted to limit Russia's stockpile of civilian, reactor-grade plutonium, as opposed to the weapons-grade plutonium specifically designed for use in nuclear weapons.

"U.S.-Russian Moratorium Proposed On Plutonium Production"

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Nuclear Weapons

7. US Nuclear Arsenal

The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has an archive of documents and related NRDC commentary on both the US Department of Energy's nuclear "Stockpile Stewardship" strategy and the National Ignition Facility, a laser facility under construction that constitutes a major component of the department's strategy. NRDC argues that the NIF and other elements of the Stockpile Stewardship program represent a sizable reinvestment in nuclear weapons research capabilities, which runs counter to the goal of reducing nuclear arms.

["National Ignition Facility and Science-Based Stockpile Stewardship Resource Page"](#)

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8. Russian Nuclear Tests

Itar-Tass reported that Russia has carried out seven underground tests at the nuclear test field at Novaya Zemlya archipelago in the Russian Arctic. Since September 1998, at least 14 subcritical tests were blasted in the tunnels near the Matotchin Shar that divides the northern and southern island of Novaya Zemlya.

"Seven subcritical tests in Arctic"

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9. Nuclear News

The latest addition of the Russian-American National Security Advisory Council (RANSAC) Nuclear News includes articles on Core Conversion, Nuclear Waste, the START Process, and Russian Nuclear Forces.

"RANSAC Nuclear News"

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Taiwan Straits

10. Taiwan Elections

Nicholas Berry, Senior Analyst at the Center for Defense Information, says that US officials have communicated to both Taiwan and the PRC the costs of inflaming their relations before the March 18 Taiwanese presidential election. The US is warning Taiwan candidates against advocating independence, while cautioning the PRC against a repeat of 1996, when the PRC conducted missile tests in the Taiwan Straits at the time of Taiwanese elections.

"U.S. Calms the Issue of Independence as Taiwan's Presidential Election Approaches"

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11. Taiwan Security

PRC experts have lately been publishing assessments questioning Taiwan's weaponry capabilities. PRC military strategist Zhang Daji in this month's China Review says that Taiwan's hope of developing offensive weapons that would be up to the challenge of fighting against an attack from the PRC is doomed to failure. Stephen J. Yates, Senior Policy Analyst in the Asian Studies Center at The Heritage Foundation, argues that the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act is a necessary supplement to the Taiwan Relations. He maintains that Taiwan's security is still threatened by China's escalating military modernization and buildup across the Taiwan Strait.

["THE MIDDLE KINGDOM: Dissing Taiwan's weapons"](#)

"Time to Act on Taiwan's Security"

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Diplomacy

12. PRC Foreign Relations

Jing-dong Yuan analyzes the PRC's evaluation of multilateralism and its place in PRC foreign relations in the Asia-Pacific region. Yuan contends that the PRC is not opposed to multilateral approaches, but now recognizes that multilateral engagement is unavoidable and indeed can be useful in advancing the PRC's interests. However, the PRC remains leery of entering into arrangements that might constrain its independence and flexibility.

["Asia-Pacific Security China's Conditional Multilateralism and Great Power Entente"](#)

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Military

13. Asian Naval Buildup

Stratfor analyzes the recent trend of Asian naval forces to focus on two key systems - missiles and submarines. In East Asia, navies possessing or planning on obtaining submarines include Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the DPRK, Singapore, the ROK, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. The proliferation of ships with anti-ship missiles is even broader.

"Asia's Naval Arms Race Revives"

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The NPP Weekly FLASH Update aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among nuclear weapons policy and security specialists.

We invite you to reply to this report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

Produced by [the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development](#).

Send comments to the Nuclear Policy Project at nautilus@nautilus.org

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