British Approaches to Nuclear Disarmament and National Missile Defense

Recommended Citation


Concerns about NMD dominated the recent Foreign Affairs Committee report. Both the report and parliamentary questions over the past year have revealed a high level of concern that the United States has exaggerated the threats and "over emphasises the way would violate the treaty as surely as pouring concrete at Shemya. If phase two were to go ahead, the United States would be using the latest equipment to investigate a new and highly visible X-band radar facility, probably at one of these two bases. The situation is murkier with regard to the US pursuit of NMD has carried two uncomfortable messages for Britain: firstly, that the US has lost confidence in nuclear deterrence and now seeks defense against threats which nuclear weapons were supposed to deter; and secondly, that NMD is symptomatic of the United States pursuing a "defensive" posture in peacetime, with a "討" of a major nuclear powers", the SDR said that "further reductions [in the largest arsenals] would be needed before further arms control agreements become feasible". Such a position is not dissimilar to that of China, amounting in effect to: We don't have to do anything about this for years, but if someone else starts doing it, we will also have to do it. Thegiants are therefore not likely to enter into any nuclear arms agreements involving reductions in their respective arsenals, but their inability to agree on comprehensive nuclear disarmament negotiations makes it unlikely that any such negotiations would be forthcoming in the near future. Despite its scepticism, the British government found itself in a dilemma over NMD. Among the many military facilities in Britain are two in Yorkshire, Fylingdales and Menwith Hill, which the United States plans to upgrade. Fylingdales, in particular, has a prominent role in the US defense structure as the only US installation on British soil.