

BASIC REPORTS

CFE TREATY: LEGACY OF THE PAST OR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE?

By **Dmitry Polikanov**

In his statement of February 7 at the International Security Conference in Munich, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov pointed out that: “One thing is clear for us – in its current form the CFE [Conventional Forces in Europe] regime cannot maintain stability and balance of interests of the state parties in the process of continuing military-political changes in Europe. The accession of seven new members to NATO without four of them joining the Treaty makes the system of its limitations imperfect, inefficient and alienated from reality.”

This has caused significant concerns in the western community about possible Russian abrogation of the aforementioned agreement. However, Ivanov was not that blunt in his speech and his ‘hidden threat’

should be considered in the general context of the Russia-Europe security dialogue.

The CFE Treaty has a long and controversial history. Signed in 1990 as a symbol of stability in Europe between the NATO countries and the Warsaw Pact, it turned into a stumbling block in Russia-West relations, particularly due to the so-called ‘flank agreements.’ The treaty provided for transparency and reduction in the armed forces and heavy armaments, but made Russia feel unsafe because of the changed configuration of its borders and alleged security challenges caused by NATO enlargement. Besides, a matter of particular concern for Moscow was the North Caucasus region, where in 1994 the operation in Chechnya was launched – which required additional mobilization and deployment of heavy weapons in

this conflict zone. For quite a long time, Russia was trying to negotiate amendments in order to adapt the treaty to the new ‘geopolitical reality.’

When in 1999 in Istanbul the parties finally agreed on the adapted CFE Treaty, it seemed that this mechanism was given new life. However, the second wave of NATO enlargement, and Russia’s unwillingness to implement some of its alleged commitments (withdrawal of forces from Georgia and Moldova), resulted in new differences over the CFE Treaty. As a result, it has been ratified only by two countries – Belarus and Ukraine.

During 2001-2003, the Russian authorities kept reminding their western partners of the need to ratify the CFE Treaty and have it entered into force. For Russians this problem was topical, since the Baltic states and Slovenia were not parties to the CFE Treaty – in the early times of post-Cold War euphoria their military arsenals were considered insignificant. Now that these countries are joining NATO, the

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EU STRATEGY AGAINST WMD PROLIFERATION

By **Clara Portela**

A ‘European Security Strategy’, presented by the High Representative of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Javier Solana, has attracted a great deal of public attention since its first draft was made public in May 2003.

In contrast, an ‘EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)’, which was released simultaneously, has almost gone unnoticed. This WMD Strategy document has gone through a parallel process to that

followed by the Solana document. Both were presented in preliminary versions at the EU Summit in Thessaloniki in June 2003 before they were adopted in their definitive form during the Brussels Summit in December. The documents should be seen as complementary.

While at first it might appear that the drafting of the WMD document has been prompted by last year’s war on Iraq, its origins go further back. In the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, the foreign ministers of the EU launched a targeted initiative “to respond effectively in the

field of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control to the international threat of terrorism”. The first outcome of this initiative was a list of measures that did not transcend the General Affairs Council conclusions of April 2002 where they were published. Despite its interim character, the list was fairly comprehensive in scope, referring to WMD as well as conventional weapons.

By the time the Strategy reached the next phase slightly over a year later, little was left of the original focus on preventing the diversion of WMD material to terrorists. The preliminary documents adopted last June at Thessaloniki (a declaration, ‘Basic Principles’ and an ‘Action Plan’)

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CFE TREATY HAS LONG AND CONTROVERSIAL HISTORY

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situation may change and there are clear signs that their military infrastructure will be actively used to the benefit of the Alliance, including possible deployment of extra NATO troops on their territory.

Russia finally got a pledge from NATO that it would urge the newcomers to join the CFE Treaty and ensure its prompt entry into force, but Moscow failed to overcome the resistance of the Baltic nations. So far the talks are going on in the format set forth by the Baltic states – first, the CFE enters into force (i.e. Russia ratifies it and keeps all its promises) and then they accede.

What prevents the treaty from coming into effect and what makes Moscow waiver between promotion of the treaty and threats of its abrogation?

Firstly, during the OSCE and NATO min-

official level it continues to plead innocence. Meanwhile, it is clear that it is not in the interest of the Kremlin to get rid of the bases as such, even though nothing prevents Russia from taking away heavy weaponry and it does so. The zone of the former Soviet Union becomes an arena of rivalry for Russia, Europe and the United States as the Russian positions are obviously weaker in this struggle for influence.

The Russian new foreign policy declared in President Putin's Address to the Federal Assembly in May 2003 provided for re-assertion in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and transformation into regional power (even though our January 2004 poll indicates that 61% of the population do not support the idea of Russia's domination over the ex-USSR states and would like to have equal relations with them like with any other country¹). For that purpose, Moscow is eager to use various economic means, multilateral institutions (such as the Common Economic Space of Four, the Eurasian Economic Community, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, etc.) and military-technical cooperation, including cheap arms supplies and the establishment of strongholds – armed points of presence (peacekeepers, bases, etc.).

Secondly, the Russian position on international law is quite confusing nowadays. The growing pragmatism of Russian foreign policy, increasing impact of *Realpolitik* and lessons learned from the U.S. examples of unilateral action, make Russian views on international legal mechanisms quite eclectic.

On the one hand, Moscow keeps reaffirming the need to preserve the existing body of international law and it is in the interest of Russia to do so in order to maintain, at least, some of its positions in global decision-making. On the other hand, the abrogation of the ABM Treaty, the operation in Iraq, rising concerns about the fact that NATO and the EU do

not need the CFE after enlargement, push Moscow to the other extreme – to review its strategy and to “play wolf with wolves.” This is the reason for Sergei Ivanov's statements about possible restructuring of the armed forces in the Leningrad military district (which will be adjacent to the Baltic nations) and his

The ratification process in the Russian Duma may be further delayed.

worries about the possible “obsolete character” of the CFE unless it becomes truly universal for Europe.

Therefore, the ratification process in the Russian Duma may be further delayed. According to Konstantin Kosachev, the new chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs: “This ratification will be complicated. I do not rule out that it will be dropped again from the list of priorities. And many problems emerge here, since our partners – e.g. NATO states – link their ratification of this document with the course of negotiations on the withdrawal of the Russian bases from the Georgian territory and the resolution of the Transdnestrian problem. We assume that such links are totally groundless. Besides, we have a large number of issues connected with the accession to this adapted treaty of four states – the Baltic nations and Slovenia.”

Meanwhile, Dr. Irina Kobrinskaya, Executive Director of the Foundation for Prospective Studies and Initiatives, believes that the CFE will become the victim of harsh bargaining between Russia and the west over the financial costs of withdrawal of the bases. If Moscow gets enough carrots, it will be ready to support the treaty. Dr. Dmitry Evstafiev, expert of the PIR Center for Policy Studies in Russia, claims that the Kremlin will anyway need some mechanism to contain secu-

Moscow failed to overcome the resistance of the Baltic nations.

isterial meetings in December and Colin Powell's visit to Moscow in January, the western countries made it clear that their ratification will depend on Russia's commitment to withdraw its bases from Transdnestria (Moldova) and Georgia. Moscow, for its part, assumes that such voluntary pledges were not mandatory for the ratification of the treaty, since Russia has already withdrawn most of its heavy arms from Georgia and closed two bases there and the process of withdrawing weapons from Transdnestria is under way (from time to time it is blocked by the Transdnestrian leadership and Russia has had to make additional concessions to this unrecognized regime).

Moscow has already missed all possible deadlines for such withdrawal, but at the

rity challenges coming from Europe. Nowadays there is no clear instrument, beside political dialogue, to confront the rising military power of the EU and its global ambitions voiced in the December European Security Strategy.

Thus, the fate of the CFE Treaty is safe until May 2004, when new members join NATO and the EU. Moscow will do its best to convince the Europeans to ratify, but will go on bargaining about the withdrawal of the bases. Evidently Russia will not even validate its threats about the increase in military potential at the flanks.

It seems, however, that the parties will not come to an agreement by summer 2004. There will be no formal withdrawal of Russia from the CFE, but the most probable scenario will be some Russian initiative on the development of a new treaty, while blaming the west for ruining the decade-long system of 'checks and balances' of European security. This will encourage Moscow to take a free hand in its talks about the military presence in the CIS. □

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¹ VCIOM all-Russia poll, January 24-25, 2004, 1595 interviewees in 39 regions of Russia.

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EUROPE MAY BE ATTACKED WITH WMD

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contain a much wider range of measures. The 'definitive' EU Strategy adopted at the Brussels Summit in December will be constantly updated.

The Strategy is divided into three chapters. A brief introduction identifies the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery as a growing threat to international peace and security – as the Solana paper did – and sets out the EU's objective of preventing, deterring, halting and where possible eliminating proliferation programmes of concern.

Chapter 1 describes the nature of the threat in four domains: the nuclear, chemical, and biological, as well as in their means of delivery, notably ballistic missiles. According to the Strategy, WMD threaten the EU directly and indirectly, since its territory could be the object of a WMD attack or these weapons could be used in other regions outside Europe where its interests are involved.

In Chapter 2, the Strategy specifies how the EU intends to tackle proliferation. According to the document, this should be done through a broad approach consisting of three main elements. The first one is the key term 'effective multilateralism', an expression created by the EU expressly to define its position. It first reaffirms its commitment to the multilateral treaty system. However, it is stated immediately afterwards that "if the multilateral treaty regime is to remain credible it must be made more effective". To this end, it is necessary to enhance the detectability of violations through best use and improvement of verification mechanisms and to strengthen enforcement.

The second element refers to the promotion of a stable international and regional environment. At this point, it is recognised that states that wish to acquire nuclear

weapons often "have real and legitimate security concerns", although this is qualified by the following proposition stating "with the clear understanding that there can never be any justification for the proliferation of WMD".

As a solution, the EU pledges to foster security arrangements and regional arms control measures as well as to expand cooperative threat reduction (CTR) programmes. It is acknowledged, though, that political solutions do not work easily and rapidly; therefore the EU should follow a dual policy, which consists in preventing, and halting proliferation programmes "while dealing with their underlying causes". Finally, the third element of this approach is cooperating closely with other partners.

Chapter 3 begins by underlining the need to integrate all the means at the disposal of the EU. Then, it proceeds to suggest a wide-ranging list of measures which it describes as a 'living action plan', since it is meant to be revised and updated, and its implementation will be constantly monitored. The list contains measures of a very diverse nature, ranging across the whole WMD field. Some of them are geared at technically assisting third countries, others intend to promote the inter-

The strategy reiterates that the role of the UN Security Council should be strengthened.

national criminal legislation within the EU member states, and some others continue with the EU's traditional policy of promoting adherence to treaties.

Particular emphasis has been placed on strengthening export controls, where the

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EU aspires to acquire a 'leading role', and in CTR, for which a separate budget line has been created. Significantly, the EU embraces the US launched Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) framed to intercept shipments of suspected WMD materials.

The Strategy introduces several significant novelties. The main one is that it

“If the multilateral treaty regime is to remain credible it must be made more effective”.

obviously creates an integrated framework for EU action in this field. While the EU already had a role in this field previous to the adoption of the Strategy, it consisted of some fragmented initiatives and declarations reiterating the agreed objectives of the non-proliferation regime agenda.

Secondly, by making non-proliferation a priority of its external action, the EU has transcended its traditionally rather passive attitude towards the regime. After emphasising its commitment to the multilateral regime, giving it pre-eminence over other solutions, it also recognises that it needs to be improved in order to be effective.

As the April 2002 list of measures announced, the intention is to “fill identified gaps in the current pattern of multilateral instruments”. The EU acknowledges that the multilateral system is weak and it is volunteering its services to revitalise it.

Finally, another central innovation of the Strategy is the introduction of new means in the fight against proliferation. The range of instruments available include: multilateral treaties and verification mechanisms; export controls; political and economic levers including trade and development

polices; CTR; interdiction of illegal procurement activities and, as a last resort, coercive measures in accordance with the UN Charter.

The intention to make use of the whole range is made clear when it is stated, “while all are necessary, none is sufficient in itself”. Their scope is explained thus: “political and diplomatic measures (multilateral treaties and export control regimes) and resort to the competent international organisations form the first line of defence. When these measures have failed, coercive measures under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and international law (sanctions, interception of shipments and, as appropriate, the use of force) could be envisioned.”

While these provisions point to a departure from EU practice so far, many of them remain vague. On the use of force, there is no agreement between member states. While it is recognised that force might be resorted to as a means of combating proliferation, it is emphasised that it should be done in accordance with the UN Charter. The strategy reiterates that the role of the United Nations Security Council should be strengthened – however, nothing is said about how this could be done. Even though the need to co-operate with the United Nations is mentioned in the chapter on co-operation, the shape that this collaboration should take is left undefined.

Also, the document floats the idea that security assurances should be “further explored”. However, it is not specified who should give what kind of assurances to whom. Finally, the strategy places particular importance in the Mediterranean region, which is unsurprising in view of Europe’s geostrategic location. Still, these provisions are also vague.

The strategy has not been framed within the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which despite its name, only refers to a crisis management capability. However, the fact that this document has been adopted in the same year in which the European Union has deployed troops

for the first time, and that it has been released simultaneously with the Solana paper clearly adds up to the ever more manifest security dimension of the EU’s foreign policies.

In order to promote this objective, the EU has decided to insert conditionality clauses into association agreements with third countries. The so-called ‘non-proliferation clauses’ will be ‘essential elements’ of such agreements, which means that non-compliance will allow the EU to suspend the application of the treaty. The inclusion of these provisions will add to similar clauses for the protection of human rights, which have been in use for about one decade, and to the recently introduced ‘anti-terrorism clauses’.

Mr. Marc Deffrennes, a senior official from the Security Policy Unit at the European Commission’s External Relations Directorate, characterises the adoption of the Strategy as a “major step taken by the EU”, which sends “a clear political signal to the international community”. According to Deffrennes, the strategy demonstrates the EU’s preoccupation with security: “Next to the welfare of people by fostering principles and means of economic development, the EU also cares about their required security”. For him, the challenge coming before the EU will be to combine both objectives appropriately. □

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RUSSIA'S SECRET WEAPON: MYTH OR REALITY?

By **Dmitry Polikanov**

Russia completed its staff exercise in February. It was accompanied by large troop redeployments and checking of the viability of the Russian strategic arsenal. Heavy bombers patrolled the northern seas, submarines and test ranges launched ballistic missiles and satellites and Moscow checked its missile defense system.

Military analysts recognized that the current exercise was unprecedented in scale and it has been 20 years since the Soviet Union conducted exercises on this scale. A significant outcome of this "staff training," as the General Staff put it, was President Putin's statement about the existence of Russia's new 'magic' weapon capable of penetrating any missile defense system. This caused immediate speculation in the west and within the Russian expert community about the character of the new arms and their potential targets.

The exercise in general was quite anti-American in character. Speaking to the military on February 22, the President noted that Russia had no aggressive plans or imperial ambitions. However, the entire concept of the exercise was designed to respond to the capabilities available to the only superpower – no other country in the world has missile defense systems (the installation of which has recently been accelerated), no other country can expect the attacks of Russian cruise missiles and heavy ballistic missiles and no other country has plans to conquer outer space and fill it with attack satellites.

Moscow has never concealed its dissatisfaction with the U.S. national missile defense (NMD) initiative, and its abrogation of the ABM Treaty. Moscow has also frequently promised in the past to devise some asymmetric response to the U.S. plans. Will the new weapon contribute to this purpose?

Gen. Yuri Baluevsky, First Deputy Chief of the General Staff, noted that this was a "hypersonic aircraft... capable of flying not only on a ballistic trajectory with hypersonic speed, but also in the atmosphere, and it can change at its own will the flight path."

The opinions of experts differ. Some believe that it is quite difficult to change the existing characteristics of the ballistic missile itself. A new gliding warhead would have to be developed, just as was planned for the 'Topol-M' missiles during the command of Igor Sergeev as Defense Minister. Others presume that the new weapon is a cruise missile. Even in the Soviet times the USSR was thinking about developing a ballistic missile carrying several cruise missiles capable of penetrating the multi-echelon air defense system of an adversary. In 1997, Russian designers presented the AS-19 Koala hypersonic missile with the range of 3,000 km. Officially, the works stopped at this stage and the missile has never become operational. Perhaps, some of the ideas have been realized in the development of the new weapon.

The most important question, even if such weapons really exist, is the prospect of its delivery to the Armed Forces. According to the Russian Defense Ministry, such armament may reach the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) around 2010. However, there are serious doubts about the implementation of such plans.

Russia has substantial problems with getting sufficient funding for its military. The current financing is inadequate and is sufficient only to ensure modernization of the old weapons and paying social benefits to the military. The funding for the strategic forces has been reduced in recent years in favor of the conventional forces which are supposed to perform the tasks of the future, that is to be involved in local conflicts rather than global confrontation.

There is a clear lack of coordination as far as the realization of the state defense order is concerned. Previously, lots of money was poured into research and development programmes, which bore practically no tangible results. Therefore, even the production of the Topol-M missile system is going quite slowly and Moscow keeps extending the service life of its old missiles within the framework of the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT). The state of the Russian missile defense system created under the ABM Treaty is also quite deplorable as it is armed with weapons that are 20-25 years old, according to Anatoly Kornukov, the former commander-in-chief of the Russian Air Force.

Meanwhile, Moscow is returning to the promotional tactics of the former Soviet Union. High oil revenues and overall stability in the country, as well as the general course toward "restoration" of the Russian positions in the world imply that the Ministry of Defense is starting to flex its muscles and to demonstrate to the President its loyalty and ability to defend the country. These exercises served to remind the world of Russia's nuclear arsenal (one of a few trump cards still remaining in the sleeve of the Kremlin). They also helped draw attention away from the true problems of the Russian Armed Forces – failed military reform, sluggishness of the General Staff, lack of advanced weapons and the slow pace of establishing the 'permanent readiness' divisions.

Thus, one may assume that, despite the victorious reports of the Russian top military, Moscow can hardly expect to get such a 'super-weapon' in the near future. Moreover, even if such a weapon is designed it will take a long time to get it into production and to make it fully operational and available to the Armed Forces, since hypersonic missiles seem to be quite an expensive item, even for the United States with its X-34.

The story of the development of a universal missile for the SRF and the Navy is instructive here. The process of trying to change the concepts was so inefficient and costly that, as a result, the newly built

nuclear-powered submarine-launched ballistic missile (SSBN)—the alleged ‘future of the Russian strategic deterrence forces’ was left without any weapons, despite their official inauguration by Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov.

According to a leading Russian military analyst: “The new secret weapon capable of penetrating any missile defense

system is unlikely to be deployed in the near future. Rather, it runs the risk of becoming another myth of the Russian top military.” □

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IRAN AND THE IAEA

By Dave Andrews

Disquiet about Iran’s nuclear programme was heightened in August 2002 when an Iranian opposition group disclosed the existence of secret uranium enrichment and heavy water production facilities at Natanz and Arak respectively. The Natanz facilities in central Iran, in particular, raised suspicions when satellite photographs showed that much of the building was being built underground at a depth of 75 feet.

Iran signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1970 and concluded a Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1974. The new revelations raised concerns that Iran had breached its obligations under the NPT and, after some delay, an intensive round of inspections and discussions between the IAEA and Iran began in February 2003.

Iran maintained that its nuclear programme was peaceful in intent and that it aimed to install some 7000MW of nuclear generating capacity, including completion of the Bushehr reactors, over the next 20 years. It said it wanted to diversify nuclear generation with Heavy Water Reactors (HWRs), Light Water Reactors (LWRs) and had also looked at Canadian Deuterium Uranium and Magnox reactors. It also wanted to become self sufficient in fuel production and officials indicated that it might reprocess spent fuel to close the fuel cycle.

In an initial report in June 2003, the IAEA noted that Iran had failed to declare the import of some 1.8 tonnes of natural ura-

nium, in various forms, from China in 1991 as required to under the Safeguards Agreement. Some of this material was subsequently processed in facilities which should also have been declared. Although the amounts of material involved were not large they were not insignificant in terms of the ability to conduct nuclear research and development activities. Many questions also remained about Iran’s centrifuge enrichment, the sophistication of which had surprised the IAEA inspectors, and its heavy water production programme.

In September 2003 the IAEA reported further undeclared processing of nuclear materials and that a number of important issues were outstanding, particularly in relation to the enrichment programme which it now transpired had been in existence, undeclared, for 18 years. In contrast to earlier information given by Iran about the start date and indigenous nature of this programme, it has now been revealed that the decision to launch it had actually been taken in 1985 and that Iran had received drawings through a foreign intermediary in 1987. Problems in obtaining information and access were also reported.

As a result, on 12 September, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution calling for Iran, inter alia, to suspend all further uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities and set a deadline of 31 October for compliance.

Following concerted diplomacy by Britain, France and Germany, Iran announced on 21 October that it would temporarily suspend uranium enrichment and

would sign an Additional Protocol with the IAEA. Pending its ratification, Iran agreed to act in accordance with the provisions of the Protocol. In a letter to the IAEA, Iran said it would “provide a full picture of its nuclear activities with a view to removing any ambiguities and doubts” about its peaceful intent. The letter also revealed that between 1988 and 1992, Iran had irradiated UO₂ targets and extracted small quantities of plutonium. Between 1991 and 2000, it possessed a laser enrichment programme, in the course of which 30 kg of uranium metal, not previously declared to the IAEA, had been used.

The November 2003 IAEA report again listed further examples of failure to declare activities. These included the testing of centrifuges at the Kalaye Electric Company in 1999 and 2002 with 1.9 kg of imported uranium (previously reported as having been lost via a leaking valve) and several instances of undeclared foreign assistance, including four countries that provided components, material and information for the laser enrichment programme. The Board called on Iran to urgently undertake and complete all necessary corrective measures and decided should any further serious failures come to light it would meet immediately and consider “all options at its disposal”. Iran followed this meeting by signing the Additional Protocol on 18 December, although it will not come into effect until ratified by the Iranian Parliament.

Whilst positive about Iranian cooperation and progress on verification, the IAEA’s February 2004 report again highlights new disclosures and issues that remain to be resolved. Of particular concern are:

- Iran had received P-2 centrifuge drawings from a “foreign source” (Pakistan) in 1994 and had carried out P-2 related research and development activities between 1999 and 2000. The P-2 is a more advanced centrifuge than that currently being installed at Natanz and is capable of greater separative work. This information had not been included in Iran’s “complete centrifuge R&D chronology” declared in October 2003.

UK NUCLEAR COLLABORATION WITH THE UNITED STATES

Nicola Butler and
Nigel Chamberlain, BASIC

- Iran had irradiated Bismuth metal samples between 1989 and 1993 and attempted to extract Polonium from them. Whilst Iran has said this was done for civilian purposes, the report notes that it has not been able to provide evidence to support this. Polonium 210 can, with Beryllium, however, be used as an initiator in a nuclear weapon of early design.

- Environmental samples showing uranium enriched to 36% U235 at the Kalaye Electric Company in more than just trace quantities. This is far higher than the 3% – 5% enrichment normally used in nuclear fuel and the 1.2% enrichment previously acknowledged by Iran. Uranium enriched to 36%, however, is known to be used in certain Russian submarine and research reactors and its discovery in Iran may indicate that it was procured on the black market. Use of uranium enriched to this level would make production of weapon-grade HEU easier and faster.

- Apparent discrepancies between Iran's estimates of plutonium reprocessed and the IAEA's calculations. Although the total amounts are small, the experiments would have provided Iranian scientists with valuable experience in handling and working with plutonium.

At the time of writing, the Board of the IAEA is still considering this report at its meeting in Vienna. It seems likely, however, that it will issue a further compromise resolution that will criticize the lack of full disclosure by Iran, but putting off referral of the matter to the UN Security Council for consideration in June 2004.

Whilst none of the above IAEA reports can be said to provide conclusive evidence that it has been pursuing a nuclear weapons programme, they all demonstrate a consistent failure by Iran, over an extended period of time, to meet its obligations under the NPT. A smoking gun may not yet have been found but there is a distinct smell of gunpowder lingering in the air. □

* *Dave Andrews is a consultant to BASIC on nuclear proliferation.*

One piece of legislation that wasn't mentioned in the Queen's Speech in October 2003, although it will feature in the 2004 Parliamentary timetable at some stage, is the renewal of the 1958 Agreement For Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes. Often referred to as the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement, it provides the basis for extensive collaboration between the United States and Britain on all aspects of nuclear weapons development.

The Mutual Defence Agreement enables the United States and Britain to "exchange" information and to "transfer materials and equipment" with the objective of improving each other's nuclear weapons "design, development and fabrication capability".

The agreement covers development of nuclear doctrines, intelligence sharing, development of "delivery systems" (such as submarines and missiles), information on nuclear research reactors, transfers of nuclear submarine technologies and fuels, and special nuclear materials such as plutonium and highly enriched uranium. Information is exchanged via Joint Working Groups and through a range of visits and exchanges between nuclear weapons laboratory personnel.

In a 9 July 2003 response to a Parliamentary Question put down by Alan Simpson MP, the Government has informed us that, "discussions are now under way ... on the renewal of the 1958 Agreement For Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes".

Seemingly, the Government is keen to get the Mutual Defence Agreement renewed as the December 2003 Defence White Paper indicated that a decision on whether

to replace the United Kingdom's Trident nuclear weapons system will be required during the next Parliament. Although we are informed that there are no plans to replace the United Kingdom's nuclear deterrent, the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston has continued to develop its scientific endeavour and enhance its technical capabilities in readiness for an affirmative decision, should it be forthcoming.

British weapons laboratories and shipyards have worked closely with their US counterparts in the research, development and production of Polaris and Tri-

The British Government has stated that it has no intention of developing 'mini-nukes'

dent systems since the 1970s and it is unlikely that a new nuclear weapon system could be produced in the United Kingdom without extensive help from the United States.

The Bush Administration and the US nuclear weapons laboratories have plans for a new generation of nuclear weapons, including 'bunker busters' and 'mini-nukes'. The proposal is that these weapons could be used in conjunction with US missile defences and high-tech conventional weapons in a strategy of preemptive war. Although the British Government has stated that it has no intention of developing 'mini-nukes', the transatlantic collaboration between the weapons laboratories, provided for under the Mutual Defence Agreement, leave that option open for the future.

NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR AT BASIC

Matt Martin has joined BASIC as Deputy Director in our Washington office with effect from 12 April 2004.

He brings a wealth of experience working directly on nonproliferation, cooperative threat reduction, missile defence issues, and the full range of strategic security issues, both in the think tank world and as a legislative aide in the US Senate.

Since January this year, he has been a research consultant on a counter-terrorism project at the Fourth Freedom Forum. Prior to that he held senior project-level positions at the Center for Arms Control & Non-Proliferation (Acting Project Director/Assistant Project Director, missile defence project, March 2002-November 2003) and the Henry L. Stimson Center (Project Director, nuclear nonproliferation and cooperative threat reduction, August 2001-February 2002; Research Associate, April 2000-August 2001).

From July 1996 to April 2000, Matt worked in the Washington office of Senator J. Robert Kerrey. As his legislative aide for defence (from May 1998), Matt handled all the usual work of a personal office legislative aide: following bills, meeting with constituents, shepherding amendments, writing policy memos for the Senator, supervising junior staff and interns. In cooperation with the foreign affairs LA, he assisted the Senator in his active role on CTR and US strategic stockpile issues.

In his career to date, Matt has demonstrated the capacity to undertake in-depth research, advocacy on Capitol Hill, and outreach to the media and the public. He will also bring to BASIC good contacts with Congress, the media, and colleagues in the arms control community. □

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The Labour Government has been reluctant to give any detail of its plans for debate and oversight of the renewal of the Mutual Defence Agreement during this parliamentary session. BASIC wrote to Peter Hain MP, the Leader of the House of Commons, in December 2003, asking him if parliamentary time would be allocated to debate the Mutual Defence Agreement renewal. A further request was made in February.

Peter Hain's reply of 2 March indicated that discussions were continuing and, "I cannot yet say when we will be ready to lay the resulting documents before the House". He agreed, "that the issues related to our nuclear co-operation with the United States are of great importance and that they fully merit the scrutiny to which you refer. But I cannot undertake to find Government time for a debate on the renewal of a long standing Agreement which will not require any consequential amendment to UK legislation".

A Ministry of Defence official has also written to BASIC stating, "it would be premature to predict exactly when Ministers will lay any amendments before Parliament, but this is likely to be later in the year".

Bruce George MP, Chairman of the House of Commons Defence Committee, has indicated that it is likely that the committee "will wish to examine the proposals" when amendments have been laid before the House.

Donald Anderson, Chairman of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee has indicated that while his committee "has a role in considering any proposal to amend an international treaty", he is "not minded at this stage to propose an inquiry by the FAC into the 1958 MDA".

At 1.56 am on 16 December 1994, Alan Simpson MP rose in the House of Commons to speak in the last debate on the renewal of the Mutual Defence Agree-

ment. He stated that he "had hoped that the Government would raise it in Government time, at a slightly more popular hour, but perhaps it is more fitting that it should go through the House in the dead of night".

"The issues related to our nuclear co-operation with the United States are of great importance".

He added, "Had the Government had their way, the agreement would have passed us by without any debate. It was laid formally on the Table on 21 October and, under the Ponsonby rules, would have been left there for 21 working days and then ratified without debate in the House".

The amendment had passed through the US Congress on 23 May 1994 after it had been laid before both the House of Representatives and the Senate for 60 days. British MPs were concerned that they were not afforded similar opportunity to debate fundamental legislation, which underpinned the US-UK 'special relationship' with a specific focus on the nuclear weapons programmes of the two countries.

There is growing concern within Parliament that the current Government would prefer the 2004 renewal of the Mutual Defence Agreement to be ratified with even less scrutiny than was permitted by the 1994 Government. □