

Indo-Russian N-fuel deal hits US hurdle

Ritwik Mukherjee
CALCUTTA 1 DECEMBER

THE SUPPLY of Russian fuel tabs for India's Tarapore atomic power station has hit a roadblock in face of strong opposition from the US administration and the pro-US lobby in the South Block.

India was supposed to get a Russian consignment of fuel tabs in October, which would have sufficed for the Tarapore Atomic Power Station (TAPS). The supply deal figured in the "strategic agreement" signed between the two countries during Russian President Vladimir Putin's four-day visit to India in early October.

According to external affairs ministry sources in Calcutta, it was India who had urged Russia to supply the required quantity of nuclear fuel for safe exploitation of TAPS.

The delivery schedule is an uncertainty, with the US administration almost succeeding in impressing on the Indian govern-



Putin: Superpower's N-vy

ment and some international fora that the Russian supplies would be a violation of the non-proliferation multilateral agreements.

But the Putin administration, in its turn, is not sitting idle either. It is trying to convince India and reaching out to various international platforms, contending that it would not be a violation of agreement among the members of

Group of Nuclear Suppliers or members of the G-8.

It has put forward some facts before the Vajpayee government: The G-8 meeting, dedicated to nuclear security problems, had come to a conclusion that nuclear security must prevail over other considerations and security of nuclear energetics must consider all the stages from producing fuel for nuclear power stations to processing of nuclear wastes.

The meet had also resolved that the use of N-energy must be carried out under the fundamental principles of nuclear security and G-8 nations must consolidate their efforts to raise the level of nuclear security across the world.

Tarapore Nuclear Power station provides some of the states with the much-needed electricity. And so, if it stops functioning, it will understandably lead to "just too many serious problems," sources said in defence of the import of Russian fuel tabs.

The other defence is that

though India is not a participant of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the country is nevertheless an active member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). India has all along been playing a crucial role in promoting international cooperation for peaceful use of nuclear energy.

"The agreement between India and IAEA secures the scope for monitoring India's activity in the nuclear sphere. And ever since the signing of the agreement, India's commitment to the principles of nuclear security has never been questioned because India has never tried to use her nuclear materials for military purposes," sources in the external affairs ministry said.

Again, in accordance with the agreement between Russia and IAEA, the supply of fuel tabs is subject to international guarantee. If Russian fuel tabs are delivered to India it will be under the purview of Russia and IAEA and it will, in fact, promote India's

The Economic Times

- 2 DEC 2000

Russia set to clash with US and UK over Iraq 4/10

Ewen MacAskill
London, October 3

RUSSIA IS set to clash with the US and Britain at the UN Security Council this week after confirming it is to revive its scheduled flights to Iraq.

Britain and the US regard the Russian move as breaching the sanctions regime imposed against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein for trying to take over Kuwait and starting the 1990-91 Gulf war.

A Russian spokesman tried a different interpretation yesterday, claiming commercial flights were not covered by UN resolutions against Iraq.

Scheduled passenger flights between Moscow and Baghdad would drive a hole through the crumbling sanctions regime and encourage President Saddam to continue to defy the west.

There have been individual flights from Russia and France in the last month, but scheduled flights would be a big change.

Iraq's Minister for Transport Ahmed Murtada Ahmed Khalil, on a visit to Iran yesterday, dis-

closed that Aeroflot would be resuming commercial flights in a fortnight.

He asked the Iranian government to allow the Russians to use its airspace, according to the Iranian news agency, Irna.

An Aeroflot spokeswoman had said in Moscow earlier in the day that the 51 per cent state-owned carrier intended to resume flights to Iraq. It had signed a memorandum of understanding with Iraqi Airways, she said, but gave no indication at that point of when the service would start.

In London, a Foreign Office source said last night: "The resumption of scheduled flights amounts to a resumption of trading relations, and that would be a breach of sanctions."

As well as trying to shore up the sanctions regime, the US and Britain also send their warplanes over northern and southern Iraq, denying air space to Iraqi fighters.

The resumption of Russian commercial flights would complicate an already tense and dangerous situation.

Both Russia and France - eager

to do business with Iraq - have tried at the UN to persuade the US and Britain to end the no-fly zones, set up after Baghdad cracked down on northern Iraq's Kurds and southern Iraq's Shi'ites following the Gulf war.

A Russian spokesman in London defended the decision to resume flights: "According to our point of view, nothing in the resolution of the security council forbids it."

A British-inspired resolution was passed at the UN security council last December holding out the possibility of a compromise over sanctions but Baghdad has rejected it. The new move by Russia, the country's London spokesman said, should be taken as a signal that the world community must act to overcome this impasse: "We have to do something."

The US and Britain have become increasingly isolated this year. While the international community feels repugnance towards President Saddam, there is also a growing sense that sanctions and the no-fly zone are hurting civilians rather than the regime.

(Guardian News Service)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

7 OCT 2003

Russia, US sign pact to destroy 68 tonnes of plutonium

Moscow, Sept. 2: Russia and the United States have formally signed an agreement to destroy a total of 68 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium, the Russian government said on Saturday.

A government statement said US vice-president Al Gore signed the agreement in Washington on Friday and Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov signed it in Moscow on August 29.

The deal was agreed between Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Bill Clinton during their summit in Moscow in June.

The West has doubted the ability of post-Soviet Russia to properly control depots where weapons-grade plutonium is stored and has expressed fears that it could get into wrong hands. US officials, alarmed by nuclear ambitions of some "rogue states",

have said it only takes six to eight kg. of the metal to make a powerful bomb.

The agreement stipulates that the activities of Russia and the United States connected with the destruction of weapons-grade plutonium will be open for the international community and will be under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency, "the government statement said.

Mr Putin and Mr Clinton are due to meet on the fringes of the UN Millennium Summit in New York next week.

The plutonium pact obliges each country to render the weapons-grade plutonium into a form unusable for nuclear weapons and to pledge never to use it for that purpose again.

According to US officials the 34 tonnes to be destroyed by each country represents about one quarter of Russia's military plu-

tonium stockpile and about one third of that of the United States.

The programme will cost \$5.7 billion to implement and take about 20 years to complete, officials said. The Russian programme is estimated to cost more than \$1.7 billion and the US programme \$4 billion. The funding for the Russian programme will come partly from the United

SPOTLIGHT

States. The US Congress has already appropriated \$200 million for the purpose and has pledged to seek more.

The deal, aimed at reducing the nuclear threat, was agreed between Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Bill Clinton during their summit in Moscow in June. According to the agreement each

country agreed to dispose of and remove from circulation 34 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium, enough to make thousands of nuclear weapons.

The new pact expands on an agreement in principle dating from 1998. It details goals, schedules, monitoring principles and conditions for the irreversible disposal of the plutonium.

Each country must either irradiate the plutonium as fuel in reactors or immobilise it with high-level radioactive waste to render it suitable for geological disposal. The United States plans to use 25.5 tonnes as fuel and to immobilise 8.5 tonnes; Russia will use all 34 tonnes as fuel. Each country must construct industrial-scale facilities to convert the plutonium into fuel. The facilities must begin operation by 2007, dispose of at least two tonnes

of weapons-grade plutonium per year and seek additional capacity in other countries to at least double that rate.

The Nuclear Control Institute, an independent group that campaigns for disarmament, said the agreement failed to provide for monitoring of the use of the plutonium in Russian reactors. It said it would have been quicker and cheaper to bury the plutonium in secure dumps. Reprocessing was already in vogue, the group said. The agreement established rights, obligations and principles of monitoring and inspection of the disposal process to ensure the plutonium can never again be used for nuclear weapons or any other military purposes. The Russian programme is estimated to cost over \$1.7 billion and take 20

years to implement. (Reuters)

US gives Putin secret *Kursk* report

BEN MACINTYRE
THE TIMES, LONDON

9/9 ✓ SF 5
NEW YORK, Sept. 8. — Mr Bill Clinton has given Russian President Mr Vladimir Putin a secret US intelligence report on the sinking of the submarine *Kursk*, hinting that the Russian leader had been misled by his officials in the aftermath of the accident last month.

The summary, handed over when the two leaders met at the millennium summit, contradicts assertions by Russian officials that the submarine collided with another vessel or struck a mine.

Based on top-secret acoustic data gathered by US submarines, the report identifies two distinct explosions, probably from a malfunctioning experimental weapon on board, that tore a huge hole in the bow of the Russian submarine. US Intelligence

indicates that the 116 crew members died almost immediately when the *Kursk* sank on 12 August.

Senior US navy officer, Admiral Vernon Clark, sent a note to his Russian counterpart providing detailed information and reiterating the American position that no US ship or submarine was involved in the sinking.

The report identified two explosions, two minutes and 15 seconds apart. Officials speculated that the first, smaller explosion occurred when the experimental torpedo was being loaded, while the second some 50 times larger and equivalent to up to five tons of dynamite may have been the warhead detonating.

Mr Mikhail Gorbachov, the former Soviet leader who is also in New York for the summit, cited Mr Putin's handling of the disaster as one of a series of "mistakes of

style". Mr Gorbachov criticised Mr Putin for waiting four days to comment on the tragedy and failing to interrupt his holiday until a week after the disaster.

"He made a mistake," Mr Gorbachov said, adding that he met the Russian President several times and had levelled such criticisms in person. But, "we need to support the President ... despite the mistakes," he said.

President Putin's determination to demonstrate his position on the world stage was revealed in his jockeying for a better slot on the UN podium.

The Russian President was scheduled to speak on Wednesday afternoon, but he persuaded the Cypriot President, Mr Glafcos Clerides, to swap with him so that he could speak in the same session as the British Prime Minister and the Presidents of the USA, China and France.

THE STATESMAN

- 9 SEP 2000

U.S. refuses inspection of 'killer' submarine

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, SEPT. 16. The United States has refused to let Russian experts examine its submarines suspected of having rammed a Russian nuclear submarine that sank in the Arctic Sea five weeks ago.

The Itar-Tass news agency on Saturday quoted a Pentagon spokesman as admitting that the U.S. Defence Secretary, Mr. Robert Cohen, rejected a request from his Russian counterpart, Marshall Igor Sergeyev, to inspect the two U.S. submarines which were spying on Russian naval games in the Barents Sea during which the Kursk submarine suffered a massive explosion and sank, killing all 118 crewmen aboard.

The Pentagon spokesman, who asked not to disclose his name, made the admission after a top Russian Government official disclosed on Friday that Moscow

had sent formal requests to the U.S. and Britain to open for inspection its underwater vessels that were in the area of the Russian naval exercises on August 12 when the Kursk disaster occurred.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Ilya Klebanov, told the Russian Parliament on Friday that collision with a foreign submarine was one of three possible causes of the Kursk disaster investigated by a Government commission under his chairmanship.

He said Russian warships had spotted foreign rescue buoys in the disaster area, presumably released by a NATO submarine after it collided with the Kursk. Russians said two U.S. and one British submarines were in the Barents Sea at the time. The buoys disappeared, probably through self-destruction, before Russian sailors could recover them, Mr. Klebanov said. He informed legislators that neither

Britain nor the U.S. had responded to the Russian request to inspect their submarine.

The Pentagon spokesman told Itar-Tass the U.S. Defence Secretary had deemed such inspection improper and unnecessary. Earlier, U.S. officials admitted that American submarines did shadow the Russian naval exercise, but denied a collision occurred. Britain denied any of its submarines had been in the area at the time. Both U.S. submarines under suspicion had called at NATO ports in Norway and Britain for repairs.

The Russian and NATO military agree that the Kursk sank after its torpedoes exploded. However, they differed on what had caused the blast. NATO experts said one of the Kursk's torpedoes must have exploded due to some malfunction, triggering off a bigger blast, while Russians suggested the torpedoes exploded after a collision with another ship.

Mr. Klebanov said his commission was also considering two other possible versions of the disaster — a collision with a World War II mine and "internal malfunctions." Although he insisted that none of the theories was dominant until direct evidence had been produced, the Russian military prosecutor's office has already filed a criminal case against the yet unidentified vessel that had caused the sinking of Kursk. The U.S. refusal to allow inspection of its submarines is bound to give greater credence to the collision theory.

According to Mr. Klebanov, the exact cause of the disaster may not be determined until the Kursk had been raised to the surface. Russia plans to undertake the multi-billion-dollar operation some time next year. Before that, an attempt may be made to recover the bodies of the crewmen from the submarine.

THE HINDU

17 SEP 2000

Putin snubs US, to visit 'rogue' Libya

Fred Weir
Moscow, August 2

IN A fresh sign that Russia intends to snub the US version of global political correctness, the Kremlin has announced that President Vladimir Putin will shortly pay a visit to Libya.

"Almost all of the States that Washington has put on the pariah list are receiving warm attention from Moscow these days," says Nikolai Zyubov, a former diplomat and independent foreign affairs specialist.

"There could be no clearer sign that Russian foreign policy under Putin will steer its own course, without much regard for what the Americans want".

Libya has been labelled as a "rogue" State by Washington for almost two decades now. It was isolated by the international community after it refused to hand over two men accused of planning the 1988 Lockerbie airline bombing.

The United Nations lifted sanctions against the oil-rich North African nation last year when Libya gave up the suspects. But Washington refused to drop its sanctions and called the country's leader, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, "a leading sponsor of terrorism" in the world.

After talks with Libyan Foreign Minister

Abdel Rahman Shalgam in Moscow this week, Putin agreed to pay a visit to Libya at an unspecified time later this year.

Libya was a major customer of Soviet armaments, and it still owes Russia an estimated \$ 3 billion for past purchases.

"Moscow wants to discuss repayment of the debt, but also renewal of arms purchases, cooperation in oil and gas development and helping Libya break out of its political isolation," says Zyubov. "Libya was a good client in the past, and Putin doesn't see any reason it shouldn't be again".

Last month Putin paid a visit to North Korea, the country at the top of Washinton's list of "rogue" nations.

A week ago Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz visited Moscow, and obtained Russian support for calls to lift UN sanctions against his country. The US opposes any lifting of the blockade on Iraq.

Since becoming president in March, Putin has also met with emissaries from Iran and Yugoslavia, two more key "rogues" on the American hit list.

"It makes good economic sense for Russia to revive its ties with these countries, but Putin is also making a diplomatic point," says Zyubov. "He's saying: We don't accept the American view of the world. We have our own".

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

3 AUG 2001

USA, Russia differ on *Kursk* theory

REUTERS & UNI

57-9 308
NEW YORK/MOSCOW, Aug. 29. — Contradictions continue to pour in on what really sank the Russian submarine, Kursk, in the icy Barents Sea.

While US officials say acoustical tapes made by the American submarine, USS Memphis, in the Barents Sea support the theory that a faulty torpedo caused a fatal explosion, the Russians insist a collision with a foreign submarine sank its boat.

A Kremlin statement, jointly issued by President Vladimir Putin and defence minister Mr Igor Ivanov, said torpedoes inside the Kursk exploded after the collision.

Today's New York Times reports that sonar tapes and other recordings that captured sounds of two explosions believed to have sunk the Kursk on 12 August contain the strongest evidence of the US theory of a torpedo explosion.

US officials believe a rocket-propelled torpedo being loaded or launched as part of an exercise misfired, its engine or its fuel exploding. After two minutes and 15 seconds, a powerful explosion of the torpedo's warhead tore a gaping hole in the submarine's bow, killing most if not all of the crew instantly, the paper said.

Sonar tapes from the Memphis, one of two American submarines spying on the Russian naval exercise when disaster struck the Kursk, are being analysed at the National Maritime Intelligence Centre near Washington.

"We have subs that hear everything that goes on," the NYT quoted a senior officer in Washington as saying. "It's pretty clear to us what happened."

A Norwegian seismic institute also reported recording two explosions and Norwegian officials have said the data matched theories of a blast aboard the nuclear-powered vessel, perhaps in a torpedo that may have triggered another, bigger explosion.

THE STATESMAN

30 AUG 2000

US, Russia plan joint missile exercise

By CHARLES ALDINGER

Washington, June 30: The United States and Russia will hold a joint theatre missile defence exercise in Texas this year, but Moscow remains firmly opposed to a planned US national missile defence, the Pentagon said on Thursday.

Defence department spokesman Ken Bacon said the computer simulation exercise involving US and Russian officers was planned for Fort Bliss, Texas, in November or December and would help the former Cold War foes coordinate defences against short- or medium-range missiles fired by any common foe.

But Mr Bacon also told reporters that a bilateral security cooperation meeting of US and Russian defence officials in Moscow on Tuesday and on Wednesday did not resolve a dispute over a planned US national defence against long-range missiles.

"They have not changed their opposition, and we have not changed our determination to go forward," he said.

Both Russia and the United States are working to improve their defences against short- and medium-range missiles with ranges of several hundred to a few thousand miles. Each country has missile systems designed to shoot down theatre missiles in flight.

But the United States is also planning to establish a national missile defence, based in Alaska, against long-range missiles which might be fired by North Korea, Iran or Iraq. Russia and China oppose the move, fearing that such a defence would threaten their own strategic nuclear missiles.

Mr Bacon said plans for the third joint theatre missile defence exercise since 1996, which has been in the making for months, were discussed at the regular meeting of the US-Russian defence consultative group in

Moscow. US defence officials said that while little progress was made on the national missile defence dispute, the meeting further indicated that Russia understands the emerging global threat from all kinds of missiles.

"We have said that we are willing to sit down and talk about options with them," Mr Bacon said, noting that Russian President Vladimir Putin had said he wanted the two countries to bridge their differences.

"We are attempting to do that. The Russians listened attentively, but we did not hear back from them about ideas that they have indicated that they have but have not yet fleshed out."

Aside from Russia's opposition to US national missile defence, Mr Bacon said, the sixth in a series of such talks on US-Russian military cooperation were productive.

"The talks basically went extremely well," he told reporters.

"We agreed at this one to expand our contacts between US and Russian military officials at two levels — high level visits and, I think, more importantly, operational level visits."

He said the lower-level exchanges would be at the major to colonel range and would concentrate on cooperation in areas such as chemical-biological warfare defences and combating terrorism.

As for national missile defence, Mr Bacon said that Russian Col.-Gen. Vladimir Yakovlev and Pentagon officials discussed ways to move ahead with a joint assessment of the growing international threat from ballistic missiles.

Russia suggested following a recent summit meeting between Mr Putin and US President Bill Clinton that the two countries cooperate on a joint missile defence that would shoot down long-range missiles in their early launch phase. (Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

1 JUL 2000

NMD: Russia warns U.S.

MOSCOW, JULY 10. The U.S. National Missile Defence (NMD) system can force Moscow to equip its modernised Topol Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) with several warheads instead of just one, a top Russian official said, adding that "We can also revive the Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile programme." Besides, "there exist several other options which are more cheaper and more lethal," said the head of the Strategic Missile Force, Gen. Vladimir Yakolev.

Referring to Saturday's failed test of the NMD system, Gen. Yakolev said no modern technology can assure the U.S. of foolproof defence arrangements on its borders. However, if the U.S. pursued its arms addition policy, "then we can adopt reciprocal measures".

In an interview to the military mouthpiece *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), the missile force chief said, "We can change the principles of use of operational-tactical nuclear weapons, and increase the number of warheads on the cruise missiles."

He charged that the NMD programme would destabilise world security system, besides promoting nuclear anarchy.

Meanwhile, Voice of Russia quoted sources from

the Foreign Ministry as saying that "Saturday's failed test of the NMD system has strengthened our position and we would oppose U.S. plans to amend the 1972 ABM treaty at the coming G-8 summit in Okinawa."

Pressure on Clinton

In Washington, U.S. lawmakers have urged the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, to let his successor decide whether to build a missile defence system.

Mr. Clinton is under some domestic pressure to take steps to construct a National Missile Defence system (NMD) at a cost of up to \$ 60 billions to shield the U.S. from attacks from states like North Korea, Iran and Iraq.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers urged Mr. Clinton yesterday to press ahead with the project despite the fact that two out of three Pentagon tests, including Saturday's, failed to prove that the system would definitely work.

Ultimately, they said, this would allow the President who takes office when Mr. Clinton steps down on January 20, 2001 to make the final decision with the benefit of more test data. — UNI, Reuters

Russia snubs U.S. over Iraq

By Vladimir Radyuhin *HD-17*
MOSCOW, July 28. Russia has rejected U.S. criticism over a top-level reception accorded in Moscow to the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Tariq Aziz, and vowed to forge closer ties with Iraq.

"Russia is a sovereign and independent state and we ourselves decide with whom and to what extent we develop relations," the Interfax news agency quoted the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov, as saying after his talks with Mr. Aziz. "We have been maintaining dialogue with Iraq and will continue to do so. We're convinced this meets the interests of our two countries and the interests of the Iraqi settlement."

Mr. Aziz was given a red-carpet treatment in Moscow during his three-day visit to Russia, which ended on Friday. He met the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, the Prime Minister, Mr. Mikhail Kasyanov, and had extensive talks with the Security Council Secretary, Mr. Sergei Ivanov, and the Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov.

All Russian leaders promised to press for an early lifting of U.N. sanctions and condemned U.S. British air strikes against Iraq.

"Russia is working for the earliest end to the

sanctions in exchange for a resumption of monitoring of the banned military programmes as envisaged by relevant Security Council resolutions," the Russian Foreign Minister told a joint press conference with the Iraqi leader today.

Mr. Ivanov deplored the situation when "certain members of the U.N. Security Council" kept bombing Iraq on a daily basis while Russia was looking for a political settlement of the situation in Iraq. He urged those states to renounce the use of force and join Russia in its political efforts.

For his part, Mr. Aziz praised Russia's "instrumental role" in normalising the situation around Iraq and said Russian initiatives could "decisively" change the situation in favour of Baghdad.

Mr. Ivanov denied Arab media reports that Russia was supplying arms to Iraq and at the same time called for broader economic cooperation between the two countries. He said Russia had succeeded in unfreezing about 60 contracts with Iraq since the beginning of the current year. It was disclosed today that a Cheyabink factory of road-building machines had signed a contract with Iraq for the supply of 60 graders to Baghdad.

THE HINDU

29 JUL 2000

US, Russia differ on global security

Fred Weir
Moscow, June 2

OUTGOING US President Bill Clinton arrives in Moscow this week-end for a three-day summit with ambitious Russian newcomer Vladimir Putin. Though the two sides will try to talk around it, analysts say their views on the basic issues of nuclear arms control and global security are far apart and diverging fast.

The disconnect is basic. President Clinton, worried about the future threat of nuclear attack by "rogue" States, wants the Kremlin to drop its insistence on the 28-year-old Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and allow the US to construct a \$30-billion, supermodern missile defence umbrella for North America.

Mr Putin, struggling to restore tough central rule in his huge, ramshackle state, wants the Americans to sign on to a joint crusade against

international terrorism" - which he sees as emanating from the rebel Russian republic of Chechnya,



Bill Clinton



Vladimir Putin

summit, which begins when Mr Clinton arrives on Saturday afternoon and is whisked to the Kremlin for a

Putin said the two sides must strive to obtain "mutually acceptable decisions for the benefit of all humanity".

On the surface, broad agreement doesn't seem impossible. After all, both sides stand for continuing three decades of arms control, to make relations between the world's two largest nuclear powers more manageable, predictable and less threatening.

Under Mr Putin's direction Russia has moved rapidly to ratify the START-II and Comprehensive Test Ban treaties, and talks have begun between Moscow and Washington towards a START-III accord that would radically reduce the superpowers' atomic arsenals.

But America's fascination with National Missile Defence (NMD), a scaled-down version of Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars" scheme that brought the US-Soviet arms race to a head in the 1980s, has made Moscow dig in its heels.

backed by militant Islamic powers in the Mid-East and South Asia.

"There won't be any key agreements at this summit, that seems certain," says Irina Kobrinskaya, Moscow director of the East-West Institute, an independent think-tank. "If nothing else, the Russians know that Clinton is a lame duck. Putin is aware that he'll have to deal with someone else within a few months".

Both sides are cautiously talking up prospects for progress at the

lengthy tete-a-tete with Mr Putin. A full day of talks is slated for Sunday, mainly on economic and security issues.

On Monday, Mr Clinton will become the first US President ever to address the Russian Parliament.

"I would be surprised if we resolve all of our differences on the question of missile defence, although we might make more headway than most people would expect," an upbeat Mr Clinton said Wednesday. In a similar tone, Mr

Clinton-Putin Summit

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

9 JUN 2000

9 JUN 2000

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28/6

Putin, Clinton to discuss Taliban, Pak.

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By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, JUNE 2. The situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan will be on the agenda of a three-day Russian-American summit opening in Moscow this weekend, the Itar-Tass news agency reported on Friday.

The Russian and the U.S. Presidents, Mr. Vladimir Putin and Mr. Bill Clinton, will discuss the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the framework of their talks on global challenges to security, including international terrorism and organised crime, the Itar-Tass said quoting a "high-ranking Russian expert."

Mr. Clinton, who arrives in Moscow on Saturday night, will hold several sessions of talks with Mr. Putin, lasting 10 hours, before

leaving for Ukraine on Monday. The agenda of the talks includes some 20 topics, ranging from arms control to economic cooperation, the Itar-Tass said.

Diplomatic sources said Mr. Putin would try to enlist U.S. support or at least neutrality for Russia's possible military action against the Taliban. Worried over the Taliban's growing support for Chechen rebels, Moscow has threatened to attack terrorist-training camps in Afghanistan.

The tone for the coming discussions on international terrorism at the Moscow summit was set by the Russian-American Foreign Ministry consultations in Moscow last week. A joint statement issued at the end of the consultations voiced 'serious concern' over the Taliban's support for ter-

rorism and the "growing influence of extremist groups in Pakistan," which have "links to international terrorist networks." However, according to the Itar-Tass, Washington has turned down Moscow's proposal to sign a joint statement at the summit on combating international terrorism and illegal drug-trafficking.

The situation in South Asia is likely to come up in the context of a planned discussion of nuclear security, including the problem of non-proliferation. During last week's consultations in Moscow the sides voiced concern over the "persisting challenge to the nuclear and missile non-proliferation" in South Asia and called on India and Pakistan to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

THE HINDU

JUNE 7 2001

Clinton for a greater Russian role

REUTERS

BERLIN, June 3. — The US President, Mr Bill Clinton, ahead of his first summit with the Russian President, Mr Vladimir Putin, was today quoted as saying Russia must be given a fair say in determining world economic and security frameworks.

"If Russia shows weakness and insecurity within its own borders, then our own security is threatened," he told the German newspaper *Welt Am Sonntag*, adding that Moscow needed to be better integrated into global institutional structures.

"I am convinced the best way to achieve this goal is to enhance Russia's integration in the world economy and within rule-based political and defence structures."

"If Russia has a say in setting these rules, we think it will be more inclined to accept the legality and values of the rules," he added in a German summary of an interview to be published tomorrow.

Mr Clinton, in Berlin for a



Mr Gerhard Schroeder and Mr Bill Clinton pose for the media in Berlin on Saturday. — AP/PTI

summit of Centre-Left world leaders to discuss new approaches to globalisation, travelled to Moscow today to meet Mr Putin as part of his European tour.

partnerships with Russia. Mr Putin indicated in an interview, released by the US television network NBC on Thursday, that Russia would offer a way out of an arms control wrangle by proposing an alternative to a US plan for a Star Wars-style anti-missile defence shield.

Progressive governance meet Germany's Chancellor, Mr Gerhard Schroeder and US President, Mr Bill Clinton opened a working session today on "progressive governance" in the 21st century, adds AFP.

Mr Schroeder had invited leaders of 14 leading countries to the meeting as a follow-up to an earlier reformist summit, in Florence last November.

Reformist leaders like Mr Clinton, Mr Lionel Jospin, Mr Tony Blair and Mr Schroeder have re-defined the Left on the cusp of the millennium, turning to the centre in a "third way" more appealing to voters.

Mr Blair is unable to attend the summit. Mr Clinton is here on his way to Moscow.

Diplomatic gaffe

BERLIN, June 3. — Gerhard Schroeder made a diplomatic blunder by giving visiting US President Bill Clinton a box of Cuban cigars, German officials admitted today.

Mr Schroeder, who loves cigars, gave Mr Clinton the Cuban smokes during a private dinner on Thursday at a restaurant in Berlin's trendy Prenzlauer Berg district, the officials said.

Mr Clinton, was reportedly taken aback when Mr Schroeder said the cigars had been brought from Cuba by Germany's development aid minister who visited Havana last month.

The gift was a double faux pas. First, because the import of Cuban products to the US is banned. Secondly, also because of the role of a cigar in Clinton's affair with his former intern, Monica Lewinsky.

— DPA

US-Russia pact to destroy plutonium

Moscow, June 4 (AP) — US President Bill Clinton and Russian President Vladimir Putin today conceded differences over a proposed US missile defence programme, but declared they found common ground for resolving the issue during two days of summit talks.

During the same time, the two leaders signed agreements committing their countries to dispose of 34 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium each and to provide each other with early warning of missile and space launches.

They issued a joint "statement of principles" on missile defence that Clinton described as "an attempt to bring our positions closer together". Both described their first meeting since Putin was sworn in last month as a search for common ground.

Clinton said while they couldn't agree on everything, they spelt out their differences with "clarity and candour. And I appreciate that". Putin praised Clinton's negotiating style of "not trying to find dead ends and problems".

The US President said the joint statement "makes clear there is an emerging ballistic missile threat which must be addressed, but we have not agreed on how best to do so. We have acknowledged that the ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) treaty foresees the possibility of changes in the strategic environment that might require it to be updated."

Clinton said US and Russian experts would work to try to narrow their differences on missile defence. Putin also acknowledged that new global threats exist and said "there are a lot of problems" with the ABM treaty.

THE TELEGRAPH

5 JUN 2000

Clinton, Schroeder back Putin

REUTERS

BERLIN, June 2. — Mr Bill Clinton arrived here today before proceeding for his first summit with President Vladimir Putin tomorrow.

The German Chancellor and the US President were unanimous in their support for Mr Putin.

"We both agreed that America and Germany are interested in a stable partnership with Russia," Mr Gerhard Schroeder told reporters after talks yesterday with Mr Clinton, who flew in from Lisbon.

"We want to support Russia's political and economic stabilisation and make President Putin's job easier."

Mr Clinton's national security adviser, Mr Sandy Berger, told journalists later that both leaders believed Mr Putin was committed to modernising the Russian economy and, if he succeeded, would help entrench democracy there.

The US President also praised Germany, Washington's biggest European ally and its front line in the Cold War, as a loyal partner.

Mr Schroeder later said a decision to form a task force to help US parents who say judges here favour German ex-spouses in child custody cases, was taken.

CLINTON HONOUR

BERLIN, June 2. — Mr Bill Clinton will receive the annual Charlemagne prize for services to European unity and peace later today and also attend a conference of 14 world leaders here on how to reconcile Centre-Left values with the global competition of the "new economy".

The US President was greeted by Germany's largely ceremonial head of state, President Johannes Rau, at the Bellevue Palace, before going on to meet Mr Schroeder at the Chancellor's office.

Mr Clinton will become the first US President and only the third American after secretaries of state George Marshall and Mr Henry Kissinger to be honoured with the prize in Aachen, a war-scarred western border town that was the eighth-century capital of Emperor Charlemagne.

— Reuters

Arms race: Germany and other European powers have spoken out against the planned National Missile Defence system for shooting down rogue rockets, arguing it could upset existing disarmament accords like the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty with Russia, which Moscow has said it threatens.

"No one can dispute the Americans' right to develop what they believe is right for national defence," Mr Schroeder had earlier told the *Berliner Zeitung*. "On the other hand, we are partners in a common alliance."

The paper said the Chancellor was optimistic Washington would accommodate "its allies' interests".

There was no mention of Mr Clinton's offer, made on Wednesday, to share NMD technology — a move analysts have said is unlikely to assuage European fears of damaging relations with Moscow.

Russia, U.S. differ on missile defence

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, JUNE 5. The three-day Russian-American summit has failed to break the deadlock over U.S. missile defence plans, but left the door ajar for a future compromise.

"We hate to have a cure which is worse than the disease," the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, said at a joint summit-ending news conference with the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, last night, commenting on the U.S. intention to build a national missile defence (NMD) against possible attacks by aspiring nuclear states.

American officials said Mr. Putin showed himself to be a tough negotiator, making "absolutely clear" his opposition to the U.S. plan. But he also hinted at the possibility of a deal. "We realise that there are ways, there is a basis for resolving this apparently very complicated and sensitive question," Mr. Putin said.

A carefully worded joint statement on the principles of strategic stability reflected the differences between the two sides on the central issue of the summit. On the one hand, it incorporated the Russian position that the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), which Washington would like to amend to enable it to deploy an NMD, remains "a cornerstone of strategic stability".

On the other, the statement hinted at the possibility of changes in the ABM treaty, camouflaged as readiness to "consider possible



The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, addressing a joint session of the Russian Parliament in the lower House chamber, the Duma, on Monday. — Reuters

proposals for further increasing the viability of the treaty" to face "a dangerous and growing threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, including missiles and missile technologies". Neither India nor Pakistan was mentioned in the statement in connection with the nuclear proliferation.

Russia has so far refused to modify the treaty and threatened to withdraw from all arms accords if the U.S. pushes ahead with an NMD system. On the eve of the

summit, Mr. Putin proposed building a joint missile shield with the U.S. against "rogue states", but Mr. Clinton rejected the proposal saying it would take too long to carry through.

The vague wording of the joint statement allows Moscow and Washington to read their own meaning into it. The one point on which the two sides agreed was a "determination to continue consultations in the future to promote the objectives and implementation of the provisions

of the ABM treaty." To make up for the lack of progress on the issue of ABM defence, the Presidents signed secondary accords to scrap excess stocks of military plutonium and set up a joint missile-warning centre. The two countries agreed to convert 30 tonnes of nuclear weapons-grade plutonium each to civilian use over the next 20 years. This amount represents about one-third of the U.S. stockpile and one-fourth of the Russian stock. Clinton bid to allay fears: Page 16

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

• 6 JUN 2000

G-10 Missile Offence 8/6

The US and Russia have agreed to defang their plutonium reserves — fissile material which has come out of dismantled bombs. But would Russia deliver on its promise if President Clinton continues to go ahead with his missile defence plan? Indeed, why should it? When Mr Clinton visited India, he asked us if we were safer with the nuclear bomb. The world could similarly ask if the US will be safer with the missile defence plan. Not only the Russians and the Chinese, but even America's European allies have expressed their deep reservations about the US trying to sell the notion — this is its third attempt — that a nuclear war can be conceivably fought from behind a missile defence shield. If there is a threat from certain so-called 'rogue' nations a hemisphere away — read North Korea, Iraq etc — surely their immediate neighbours should be the ones who'd be more worried. The US has immense capability to punish any nation aiming its missiles at it, whereas the immediate neighbours would be far more vulnerable. In these circumstances, Washington's threat perception simply does not hold water. Many would recall the San Francisco speech of the then defence secretary Robert McNamara who, in 1967, proposed the first generation sentinel missile defence programme against a Chinese missile threat. The Chinese were far from posing a threat to the US at that stage and it was clear that the proposed scheme was in fact aimed at countering the Russian Galosh missile defence then being put in place around Moscow. Now, President Putin has called the American bluff by offering cooperation to develop a defence against 'rogue' missile states through the alternative 'boost phase interception' technology which has found strong support even among many distinguished US scientists and strategists.

Boost phase interception is designed to destroy a missile even as it is steadily climbing on its way to achieve its ballistic trajectory. Any missile can be detected by space satellites when its booster rockets are fired. At that stage it can be attacked and destroyed by a missile fired from a ship stationed not far from the coast. All the nations listed by the US as likely 'rogues' are close to the sea. In fact, if such a system were put in place, every nation that thinks of using its missiles offensively, would have to think twice: The only exceptions are Russia and China, which can fire their missiles from way inside the hinterland. The US has been indifferent to this concept and wants to continue with a missile interception capability that'll destroy warheads only in the 'terminal' phase. This has made the Russians and the Chinese suspicious that the missile shield is actually aimed at them — to degrade their deterrent capability and assert America's status as the sole superpower. Russia has warned that if the US went ahead with its missile development in violation of the Anti Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, it would withdraw from CTBT and not enter into START III negotiations. Both Russia and China would start expanding their warhead stockpiles. Yet there are moves to go ahead with the plan — after all, this is election year and nuclear jingoism makes good rhetoric. The last two missile defence plans produced no worthwhile results and only cost the US taxpayer billions of dollars. This time too the result is likely to be the same, but it would needlessly exacerbate international tensions.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

6 JUN 2000

US President urges open, honest debate on impact of the \$ 60 billion-Nuclear Missile Defence, insists it will not hurt Russia's nuclear deterrence

Clinton makes historic address to Duma

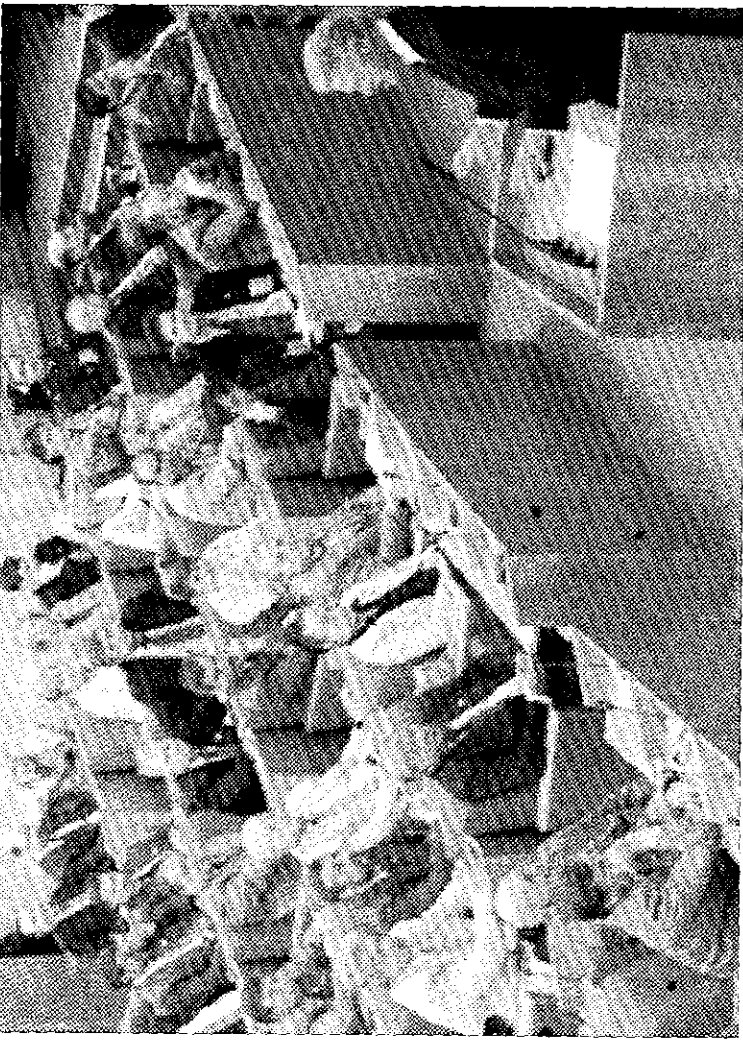
AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
MOSCOW, JUNE 5

US PRESIDENT Bill Clinton sought to allay Russian fears about US plans to build a missile defence shield in a historic address to Russian lawmakers here on Monday.

In a wide-ranging 43-minute speech, Clinton said he wanted to see a strong and prosperous Russia, urged Russia to join the World Trade Organisation and touched on Chechnya, terrorism, the economy and social issues. Only President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus has previously been accorded the honour of addressing both Houses of Parliament.

Lawmakers from the State Duma and Federation Council, the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament, listened in silence to Clinton and offered polite but brief applause at the end of his address.

In his comments, Clinton urged an honest and open debate on the impact of the \$60-billion defence shield on which he is due to take a decision this summer, and insisted it would not hurt Russia's nuclear deterrence. No-



US President Bill Clinton addresses a joint session of both Houses of the Russian Parliament on Monday — AFP

the principles of mutually assured destruction and strategic stability. I believe we ought to be able to reach an agreement about how we should proceed at each step along the way here that preserves mutual deterrence, preserves strategic stability and preserves the ABM treaty," Clinton said. "That is my goal," he said, adding: "I think we have made some progress" during his summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Russia opposes NMD, saying it will hurt Russia's deterrence and spark a new arms race Moscow can ill afford. The missile shield will breach the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the cornerstone of arms control agreements for almost 30 years, unless Russia agrees changes to allow a limited US system.

However, the two sides have so far failed to agree related deep cuts in nuclear arsenals that Moscow is demanding in exchange, leaving Clinton with the dilemma of heeding Russian concerns or pushing ahead regardless. Putin has vowed to tear up all arms controls accords with the United States if Washington unilaterally decides to deploy NMD.

clear Missile Defence (NMD) had become necessary because of the growing threat that weapons of mass destruction could fall into hands that will threaten us both -- -- rogue states, terrorists, organised criminal groups," Clinton said.

The US leader said he wanted the response to boost "the strategic stability and arms control regimes" between Russia and the United States, adding: "The system we are contemplating will not undermine Russia's deterrence, or

EXTRA 40

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21/6

Cold War revisited

IN INDIA recently Mr Clinton declaimed against nuclear weapons and the missiles systems that inevitably go with them. But in Russia this week the US President spoke like a confirmed cold warrior. Indeed, the American leader travelled to Moscow expressly to gain Russian approval to amend the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty which Washington and Moscow had signed in 1972. The US seeks to change that landmark agreement so that it may be able to fabricate its newly conceived National Missile Defence (NMD) programme, which is a diluted version of the aborted Star Wars project of the Reagan years. Small wonder that the Russian leader, Mr Putin, shot it down.

It remains to be seen how the US responds to this development, but it is noteworthy that Mr Clinton made the journey to Moscow though he has only five months left in office. If the rationale for the NMD is strong enough in American eyes, it is not unlikely that the next US leader will also pursue this goal with purposefulness, much to the chagrin of the world, given the NMD's implications. The ABM treaty was a key element in the upkeep of strategic stability.

If the 1972 compact is diluted to permit the NMD, the good done in the past would to a considerable extent be undone. Under the NMD, the US wishes to construct a missile shield for North America. This means it would be able to fire missiles at others, while others, it hopes, would not be able to respond in kind. No wonder the Russians are not biting. Nor will the Chinese for that matter, and the ballistic missiles race will be joined once again in right earnest. The US says it wants the NMD to deter the "rogue" states (Korea and Iraq), but it is not agreeable to a Russian counter-proposal for joint defence against mavericks. This gives rise to the suspicion that the NMD is nothing if not a thinly veiled proposal to secure overwhelming world dominance in the sphere of nuclear armaments even after the end of the Cold War.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

7 JUN 2000

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2000

PUTIN SAYS A POLITE "NO"

THE WEEKEND'S FULL-SCALE summit meeting between a President who is to demit office in a matter of six months and another who entered it barely a month ago has one message for the world: at the helm in Moscow is a strong, determined leader who is ready to cooperate with the sole superpower but will stand up for what he deems is in the national interest. The summit was part of a global farewell tour for the American President, Mr. Bill Clinton. But for Mr. Vladimir Putin, this was the first major international encounter as leader in his own right, with the world watching to see if he would tread the path of his unpredictable predecessor, Mr. Boris Yeltsin, and yield to Western blandishments or chart an independent course. The signals from Moscow point to a departure from the Yeltsin era. By signing two agreements and agreeing to disagree over a highly controversial security issue, Mr. Putin has let it be known that he has arrived on the international scene. The implications of the message cannot be overemphasised in a global security situation that is in a state of extreme flux. A new President set to take office in January in the U.S. adds another imponderable.

The two agreements signed by Mr. Clinton and Mr. Putin during their summit will doubtless make for a more secure world. Under one accord, the two countries agreed to convert 34 tonnes each of weapons-grade plutonium, enough for thousands of nuclear missiles, into a form unusable on warheads. A part of the huge funds needed to build a new Russian facility to do the conversion will come from the U.S. In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. had successfully concluded such agreements with the new republics, essentially Ukraine, to dismantle their nuclear stockpile and with Russia, the successor state, to convert weapons-grade plutonium as part of a larger effort to address the nuclear prolifer-

ation threat. The second agreement initialled in Moscow will help to create a permanent joint U.S.-Russia early warning system to detect nuclear missile strikes.

Mr. Clinton, however, appeared unable to persuade Mr. Putin to accept an American plan for a national missile defence system. The result of a study which predicted that in five years the U.S. will be vulnerable to missile attacks by the so-called "rogue" nations, it called for building a land-based shield. European allies, Russia and now China fear that the plan could undermine the strategic stability based on the notion of "balance of terror" that emerged from the historic 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty and heralded nuclear disarmament. The American plan, allies fear, can trigger an arms race as others seek to raise their own protective shields. During the summit, Mr. Putin acknowledged the dangers from irresponsible states acquiring strike capacity and, aware that a Republican at the White House next January might press Moscow even harder, offered to study the possibility of a joint effort to counter such threats. En route to Moscow, Mr. Clinton heard his European allies raise suggestions that Washington was overstating the threat from the "rogue" States since no nation would launch such suicidal strikes. An America showing signs of a return to isolationism and ready to hunker down in its own shield is a nightmarish scenario for the European allies. They and the rest of the world have increasing cause for worry from the competitive militarism in evidence in the U.S., driven by domestic politics in this Presidential election year. The Republicans' presumptive Presidential candidate, Mr. George Bush, has called the ABM treaty a relic of the past and has unveiled a defence system that rivals Ronald Reagan's Star Wars. The polite "no" that Mr. Putin delivered to Mr. Clinton is addressed as much to Mr. Bush.

THE HINDU

JUN 7 2000

U.S., Russia may clinch START-III

By Vladimir Radyuhin *MD. ik*

MOSCOW, JUNE 9. Russia and the United States could reach agreement on a new nuclear arms pact this year, the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov, said on Friday.

"It is possible to reach concrete agreement on START-III as early as this year," Mr. Ivanov told a news conference in Moscow. Another round of bilateral consultations on the issue would be held later this month.

Russia is believed to be trying to push START-III in exchange for softening its opposition to U.S. plans to build a National Missile Defence (NMD). However, Mr. Ivanov reiterated Moscow's opposition to the U.S. project.

"We categorically oppose plans for the creation of a U.S. national missile defence system and modifications to the ABM treaty ... which would undermine this document," he said.

The two sides failed to resolve their differences over the issue at the Moscow summit last weekend, but Mr. Ivanov suggested some progress had been made. "After long hesitations the U.S. expressed readiness to consider the possibility of establishing a global system of control over missile non-proliferation," Mr. Ivanov said.

The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, and the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, also agreed to set up a bilateral working group charged with mapping out measures to combat the threat of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, Mr. Ivanov said.

"A kind of terrorist international is being formed today, with its centre situated in Afghanistan, on the territory controlled by the



The Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov, gestures as he talks at a news conference in Moscow on Friday. — AP

Taliban," he said, adding that the working group would prepare proposals for tackling the terrorist threat through political, economic and other measures.

Putin for N. Korea

Mr. Putin will pay a visit to North Korea as part of Moscow's mounting campaign against

the U.S. plan to build the missile defence system.

The Itar-Tass news agency quoted the Kremlin press service as saying Mr. Putin will be the first Russian or Soviet leader to visit Pyongyang. Mr. Putin will also be the first world leader to meet North Korea's leader, Mr. Kim Jong-il. In recent years, Russia's relations with North Korea have been rather cool, as Moscow tried to improve relations with South Korea.

Russian Government sources said Mr. Putin's trip would be tied to his visit to China on the way to the July 21-23 summit in Okinawa of the Group of Eight industrialised countries.

The Pyongyang visit was announced on the heels of the Moscow Summit. Analysts said Mr. Putin's visit would be aimed at dispelling U.S. concerns about the missile programme of North Korea, which is labelled by Washington as a "rogue state."

Mr. Ivanov said Mr. Putin did not view North Korea as a "rogue nation" and would not seek to persuade Pyongyang to abandon its missile programme.

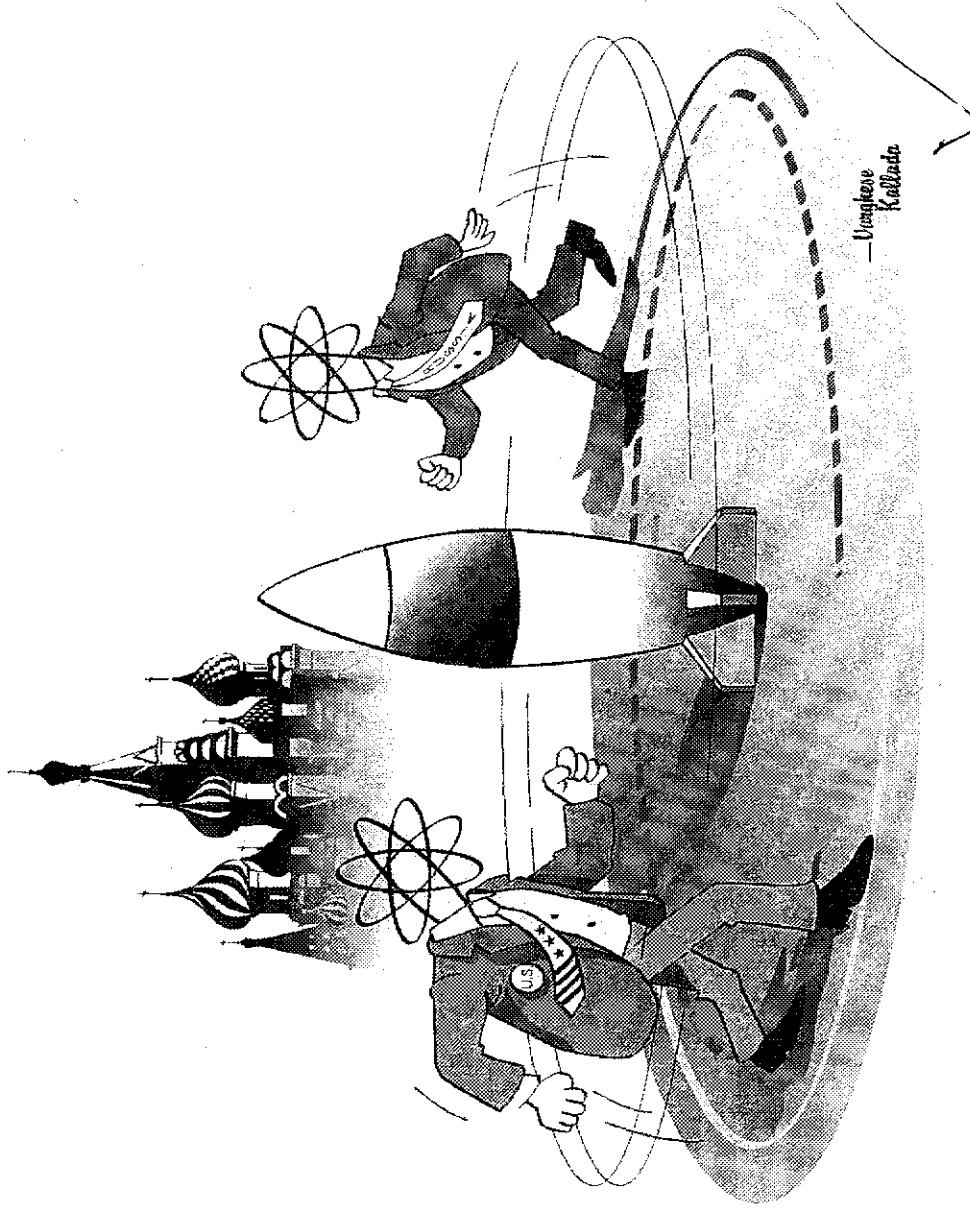
"President Putin will be visiting a friendly country and he is not going to talk anybody out of anything," Mr. Ivanov said, adding the talks would concentrate on bilateral issues and relations between the two Koreas.

However, Mr. Georgy Toloray, deputy head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Asia department, confirmed that in Pyongyang, Mr. Putin would discuss bilateral "interaction in the current military and strategic situation in the world, in particular in the light of the U.S. plans on ABM."

THE HINDU

10 JUN 2000

Putin takes the wind out of Clinton's sails



LAST WEEK, Russia's President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, demonstrated Moscow's new negotiating style and a new foreign policy agenda that calls for building constructive relations with the West without sacrificing the country's national interests. The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, discovered a major change of mood in Moscow when he paid his fifth and last presidential visit to Russia last weekend. Gone were the heady days of bear hugs and backslapping when a personal relationship between 'friend Bill' and 'friend Boris' was sometimes a decisive factor at U.S.-Russian summits.

Instead of the unpredictable but generally pliant Mr. Boris Yeltsin, Mr. Clinton met an assertive and pragmatic Mr. Putin, a tough negotiator determined to ensure that Russia is treated as an equal partner. In ten hours of talks, Mr. Putin wrangled maximum advantage for Russia in what looked like a losing position on the key issue at the summit: U.S. plans to build a national missile defence (NMD) in contravention of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty.

Mr. Clinton brought an ultimatum to Moscow: U.S. domestic political pressure in favour of an NMD made its deployment inevitable; so either Moscow agreed to his proposal to amend the ABM Treaty to allow a limited American NMD directed against 'rogue states', as Washington calls North Korea and Iraq, or it faced the risk of seeing the next U.S. President, who may be a Republican, go for a full-scale missile shield against Russia and China. Moscow's consent to his plan, Mr. Clinton argued, would boost the chances of the Democratic candidate, Mr. Al Gore, while its rejection would play into the hands of his Republican rival, Mr. George Bush Jr., who has been calling for just scrapping the ABM Treaty.

Moscow considers the ABM Treaty, which guarantees a balance of terror between Russia and the U.S., a cornerstone of global strategic stability and threatened to tear up all arms accords with the U.S. and the West if Washington went ahead with building an NMD system. This would unleash a runaway arms race that cash-strapped Russia could not afford. Mr. Putin had to walk a

razor's edge between surrendering to Mr. Clinton's pressure and plunging Russia into a crippling nuclear buildup. NATO expansion into Eastern Europe, the U.S. led NATO air war on Yugoslavia, disputes over Iraq, Iran and Caspian oil have strained Russian-American relations to the point that any wrong step could reignite the cold war.

The Russian leader avoided the pitfalls. Mr. Putin's team skillfully exploited Mr. Clinton's desperate desire to keep Russia engaged to refute his opponents' claim that he has 'lost Russia'. A joint statement on strategic stability hammered out in Moscow contained just enough give-and-take on the ABM Treaty to keep the door open for further talks, while not pinning either side to any firm commitments.

According to military experts, Russia need not fear the U.S. defence plan, as its missiles will be able to penetrate any nuclear weapons shield the U.S. might build in the foreseeable future. Therefore, they say it will be in Russia's interest to agree to the ABM Treaty modifications sought by the U.S. in exchange for Washington's

At last weekend's summit in Moscow, the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, came up against an assertive and pragmatic Mr. Vladimir Putin, a tough negotiator determined to ensure that Russia is treated as an equal partner. VLADIMIR RADYUJIN reports.

readiness to go in for the more radical nuclear arms cuts favoured by Moscow. It is unclear though, whether the Kremlin will swing a deal with Mr. Clinton or wait for his successor. Anyway, analysts say the NMD issue will not derail U.S.-Russian relations.

"Under Putin, relations with the United States will be cooler, but more stable," says Mr. Sergei Karaganov of the USA and Canada Institute. Indeed, the two sides demonstrated readiness to strengthen strategic stability by agreeing to slash 34 tonnes each of weapon-grade plutonium and set up a joint missile warning centre.

Mr. Putin's immediate goal at the summit was to persuade Mr. Clinton to postpone a final decision to deploy a NMD system, which he was expected to take next month. And this goal appears to have been achieved. In their joint statement the two Presidents vowed "to continue consultations" on the ABM Treaty.

Simultaneously Moscow launched a diplomatic offensive to expose Washington's hidden motives in pushing for a missile defence and to rally international opposition to the plan. Mr. Putin's startling offer to join hands with the U.S. in building a common defence against terrorist missile attacks called Mr. Clinton's bluff. By predictably turning down the Russian proposal, the U.S. President unwittingly admitted that an American NMD was designed to shield the U.S. not against 'rogue' Chinese missiles.

Mr. Putin clearly wants to use the debate on the U.S. planned missile defence to establish his credentials in the West as a leader committed to ensuring equal security for all countries. Hardly had Mr. Clinton left Moscow that Mr. Putin extended his proposal for a joint nuclear weapon defence to Western Europe. He pointedly did it on a visit to Italy, which is a vocal critic of an American NMD. The Russian leader is certain to repeat his offer in Germany and Spain where he goes this week. Mr. Putin's initiative has no more chance of being accepted in the West than his earlier proposal

Western investment and long-term rescheduling of its multi-billion foreign debt to sustain and speed up the economic growth that began last year thanks to a sharp rouble devaluation and soaring oil prices. It was by no accident that the first country outside the former Soviet Union Mr. Putin visited after taking office was Italy. Italy was the first Western country to invest heavily in the Soviet Union 30 years ago, helping it build up a mammoth car factory on the Volga which has been churning out 700,000 popular Zhiguli cars a year. Today, Italy is Russia's leading partner in a \$2.9-billion project to lay a pipeline on the Black Sea bed to supply Russian gas to Turkey.

Hosting leaders of the European Union in the Kremlin two weeks ago, Mr. Putin declared his firm intention to seek closer ties with Europe: "Russia was, is and will remain a European country by virtue of its location, culture and integration."

In an effort to win the West's trust, Mr. Putin has pushed through Republican presidential candidate, Mr. George Bush Jr., has in fact been advocating an NMD capable of shielding the U.S. against a Russian attack. If the U.S. goes ahead with an NMD system over Russian objections, Moscow has threatened to pull out of all arms control treaties. Russian officials have also argued that the appearance of anti-missile defence will prompt other countries, such as China and India, to develop better and more weapons to pierce the U.S. shield, causing a new arms race.

Russia has countered the American plan with a proposal to build a joint missile defence with the U.S. and Western Europe. Details of the Russian proposal are yet to be spelled out, but it is widely assumed to involve shooting down hostile missiles during their early boost stage of ascent, rather than during their descent, as in the U.S. plan. Russia could deploy its S-300 missile interceptors on ships near North Korea, for example, while the U.S. could set up its Patriot missiles near Iraq or Iran.

Mr. Clinton turned down the Russian proposal in Moscow, arguing it would take 10 years to develop the technology for it, while an NMD defence would be ready in

the Russian Parliament ratification of the START-2 nuclear arms treaty with the U.S. and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Overruling objections from the Russian military, he has resumed Russia's contacts with NATO freezed after the Alliance's attack on Yugoslavia last year.

The Kremlin's recent threat to bomb Taliban bases in Afghanistan was at least partly meant to demonstrate Russia's willingness to forge a common front with the West against Islamic extremism.

In the early years of Mr. Yeltsin's rule, Russia's rapprochement with the West led to an appreciable cooling in its relations with the East. Mr. Putin will not want to repeat the same mistake, but his idea of building a joint missile defence with the West has already provoked concerns in China.

The Russian President's visits to Beijing and Delhi later this year will show if he can pursue a balanced foreign policy.

Laying it on the line

If the U.S. goes ahead with an NMD system over Russian objections, Moscow has threatened to pull out of all arms control treaties.

THE U.S. has been pressing Russia to approve amendments to the 1972 ABM Treaty, which outlaws the kind of a National Missile Defence (NMD) system Washington says it needs to protect the country from what it calls 'rogue states'. Mr. Clinton has proposed deploying 100 interceptor missiles in Alaska by 2005 that could take down no more than 30 incoming nuclear weapons, not enough to neutralise Russia's vast nuclear arsenal, thus preserving strategic balance and mutual nuclear deterrence between the two powers.

Moscow has refused to modify the ABM Treaty suspecting that Washington's real scheme is to lay the groundwork for a later fast expansion of the defences, which would nullify the deterrent value of Russia's strategic forces. The

Republican presidential candidate, Mr. George Bush Jr., has in fact been advocating an NMD capable of shielding the U.S. against a Russian attack. If the U.S. goes ahead with an NMD system over Russian objections, Moscow has threatened to pull out of all arms control treaties. Russian officials have also argued that the appearance of anti-missile defence will prompt other countries, such as China and India, to develop better and more weapons to pierce the U.S. shield, causing a new arms race.

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Mr. Clinton turned down the Russian proposal in Moscow, arguing it would take 10 years to develop the technology for it, while an NMD defence would be ready in

five years, just in time to face the nuclear threat from 'rogue states'. This only served to reinforce Russian suspicions about the NMD.

A joint statement on strategic stability signed by the Russian and U.S. Presidents in Moscow suggests the possibility of a compromise: In return for Moscow's vague readiness to "consider possible proposals for further increasing the viability of the (ABM) Treaty which could mean its revision, Mr. Clinton accepted a link between "strategic offensive arms" and "strategic defensive arms". This could pave the way for a swap between Moscow's acceptance of changes in the ABM Treaty to allow a limited U.S. missile defence and Washington's readiness to sign a START-3 treaty, cutting the nuclear arsenals of the two countries to 1,000-1,500 warheads each.

The U.S. has been insisting on 2,000 to 2,500 warheads, while Russia may not be able to maintain more than 1,000 warheads ten years from now because of financial constraints.

"We realise that there are ways there is a basis for resolving this apparently very complicated and sensitive question," Mr. Putin said summing up the talks on missile defences in Moscow. — V. R.

Putin urges Europe to reject US defence plan

ROGER BOYES
THE TIMES, LONDON

BERLIN, June 12. — President Putin warned Britain on Sunday not to cooperate with the United States in setting up a new anti-missile defence, stressing the price could be "very high."

The broadside came before a trip this week to Berlin in which the Russian leader is determined to deepen the divisions between Europe and the United States on the controversial nuclear defence plan.

In an interview with a German newspaper, he made plain that he, like other Kremlin residents before him, sees Germany as the weak link in the alliance, potentially the most responsive to Moscow's special

pleading.

"The shape of Europe in the 21st century will depend to a great deal on the cooperation between our two countries," he said. "Washington cannot realise its plans alone. It needs European help, above all from Britain, Denmark and Norway. These states risk being drawn into a process that will lead to an unpredictable destruction of strategic stability. The price could be very high," Mr Putin said.

Gerhard Schroeder, the German Chancellor, has already expressed reservations about the new anti-ballistic missile defence, aimed at guarding the United States against nuclear strikes from so-called "rogue" nations. He said tinkering with the Anti-Ballistic Missile

Treaty of 1972 could trigger a new arms race.

Mr Putin took up the theme, saying that abolishing or undermining the ABM Treaty would make further reductions of nuclear arsenals impossible. Instead, the President said he would offer "my German colleagues" a regionally-based missile defence system with Nato, a project that would not require any revision to the treaty.

The Russian leader introduced the idea in Rome last week and he believes that it would not need a new treaty to work. It would fall within the limits of a 1997 disarmament agreement between the USA and Russia allowing regional defences against missiles with a range of less than 2,200 miles.

Mr Putin said on Sunday that

he had again raised the idea with President Clinton in a telephone conversation last Friday. The Germans and other Europeans could be tempted to give political support to such a scheme but Washington is deeply suspicious. The main technical objection is that it does not give the United States protection from long-range missiles fired from North Korea and Iran.

Moreover, the Russian plan would not even give some European countries the necessary protection from a North Korean launch.

The Putin idea seems to fall within the long Cold War tradition of Moscow diplomacy, driving a wedge between the U and Europe, but also split Western Europe itself.

THE STATESMAN

13 JUN 2000

Russia, U.S. fail to bridge rift over NMD

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, JUNE 13. The defence chiefs of Russia and the United States have failed to bridge their differences over Washington's plans to build a National Missile Defence (NMD). At their talks in Moscow, the Russian side reiterated opposition to the U.S. plan, while the U.S. Defence Secretary turned down a Russian proposal to tackle missile threats by political means.

Following his meeting with the visiting U.S. Defence Secretary, Mr. William Cohen, on Tuesday, Russia's Defence Minister, Marshal Igor Sergeyev, restated Moscow's refusal to amend the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty to allow the U.S. build an anti-missile shield.

"It is impossible to modernise the ABM treaty without breaking it," the Russian defence chief said. "A breach of the treaty will spark off a new arms race. We have proposed unfolding a 'political umbrella' to forestall missile



The Russian Defence Minister, Mr. Igor Sergeyev (left), and the U.S. Defence Secretary, Mr. William Cohen, leave after their joint news conference in Moscow on Tuesday. — AP

threats by pooling the efforts of Russia, the U.S. and other countries at the political level."

For his part, Mr. Cohen said a Russian plan to develop an anti-missile shield jointly with the U.S. and Europe was probably good for Europe, but could not offer the U.S. adequate protection against

nuclear "rogue states." The Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, also failed to sway Mr. Cohen in favour of the alternative Russian proposal during their meeting in the Kremlin today.

Mr. Putin urged the Mr. Cohen to "consider together the problems which are of concern to Rus-

sia and the United States," including a joint anti-missile defence system, the Interfax news agency reported. However, Mr. Cohen said the Russian plan "in the short-term would not provide the kind of protection we would need for the United States." At the same time, he said Washington "would be interested in exploring with the concept of 'an umbrella over the emerging threat areas' and what that would entail technically as well as from a practical point of view."

Russia has proposed building jointly with the U.S. and Europe a non-strategic missile system to intercept long-range missiles in their ascent or 'boost phase.'

Despite their differences, Mr. Putin expressed satisfaction with "the development of relations between Russia and the United States in the past few months."

The Russian and US defence chiefs today signed a programme of bilateral exchanges in the military sphere for the second half of 2000.

THE HINDU

14 JUN 2000

Deadlock over ABM treaty

Cold War shadow again

5-9
115

us-russia

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MOSCOW, April 30. — The US-Russia deadlock over the ABM treaty is threatening to revive the Cold War, with Moscow saying it will wriggle out of the Start I and Start II if Washington remains adamant on amending the 1972 treaty.

The Russian foreign minister, Mr Igor Ivanov, said on his arrival here from Washington last night that if the USA sticks to its insistence on changing the format of the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, Russia would not only opt out of the Start I and Start II but would also have no talks on the proposed Start III. The Start III envisages both sides cutting warheads from 6,000 to 3,500 by 2007.

Mr Ivanov also said if Washington goes ahead with its plans to develop the so called national missile defence system, Russia would counter the US measure in an "asymmetrical" manner.

In another significant statement, the Russian foreign ministry has said the threat of revival of the Cold War and an uncontrolled arms race have become real in the wake of the proposed defence system which the USA plans to develop in the name of an umbrella against missiles fired by "rogue" states such as Iran, Iraq and North Korea.

Russia fears the US programme would put such an

infrastructure in place that would neutralise Moscow's arsenals. An arms control journal recently revealed the US plans to base 100 missiles each at two sites, purportedly to shoot down missiles from "rogue" states.

The Russian foreign ministry statement was released here by Novosti after Mr Ivanov's unsuccessful talks with the US President, Mr Bill Clinton, and the secretary of state, Mrs Madeleine Albright, over the ABM issue.

CHECHNYA STRIKES

MOSCOW, April 30. — Russian bombers, attack planes and helicopters raided rebel positions in Chechnya today, trying to stop guerrillas from moving from mountain strongholds into the flatlands. A federal forces spokesman told Interfax that 24 plane strikes and 40 helicopter sorties over the last 24 hours had killed about 50 rebels.

Russia's interior ministry in Gudermes told Ria news agency that the rebels had attacked Russian bases several times overnight.

— Reuters

the USA's Alaska based R&D and preparatory work on creating a new national ABM network.

The general was quoted as saying this week that the new ABM system was an "embryo of a powerful monitoring network which will control the whole world in a matter of 30 to 40 years with satellites and terrestrial radars able to spot any missile wherever it is launched, whereas the other side will not enjoy such an advantage bound as it will be by the 1972 treaty."

The statement severely criticised US industrial giants for seeking profits from new military orders, including those relating to the ABM defence system or the Star Wars programme.

Meanwhile, a senior commander of the Russian armed forces, Gen. Nikolai Zlenko, warned the Pentagon that Moscow is "well informed about and alarmed at

THE STATESMAN

1 MAY 2002

Russia arrests US citizen for spying: FSB

BY ALEXANDER NATRUSKIN

Murmansk (Russia), April 5: A new spy scandal broke out between Russia and the United States on Wednesday amid intrigue over President-elect Vladimir Putin's plans to secure Kremlin control of Russia's second city, St Petersburg.

As Mr Putin travelled north to the Arctic city of Murmansk, the Federal Security Service domestic counter-intelligence agency said it had arrested a US citizen for spying.

The FSB, which Mr Putin led for one year until becoming prime minister in August 1999, said the US citizen, whom it did not name, was the head of a private firm who had earlier worked for US intelligence.

The FSB also said in a statement it had detained a Russian citizen for passing on compromising state secrets. It said he was a specialist in defence technology at a Moscow organisation.

It said it had obtained materials during the investigation showing that the US citizen had made contacts with Russian scientists to obtain state secrets.

The FSB said it had transcripts of conversations with Russian citizens who worked in the defence industry and documents showing payments to the Russians by the alleged US agent.

Although the Cold War ended 10 years ago, spying rows break out with surprising regularity between Russia and the West.

Russia last year expelled a US

diplomat after saying it caught her red handed ahead of a meeting with a contact while the FSB said last month it had arrested a Russian for spying for Britain, helped by secret services in the Baltic state of Estonia.

The US embassy had no immediate comment on the incident.

Despite his background in the FSB and as a former agent for the feared Soviet security service, the KGB, Mr Putin has never openly commented on spying allegations.

His latest trip outside Moscow was to Murmansk where problems of supplying food and fuel during the winter months are a constant headache for the authorities. He arrived in Murmansk amid fresh snowstorms and further intrigue over a forthcoming mayoral election in St Petersburg after making an unexpected stop in the city on the way north.

Mr Putin sparked the intrigue on Tuesday by intervening in the election, due in May.

He ordered deputy prime minister Valentina Matviyenko, Russia's top woman politician, to drop out of the race just weeks after backing her to take part in it. The order marked an apparent shift in Kremlin manoeuvring for control of the city, Mr Putin's home town, in favour of incumbent mayor Vladimir Yakovlev, well ahead in opinion polls. He earlier fell out of favour with the Kremlin for joining a bloc in December's parliamentary elections which opposed a pro-Putin party.

(Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

6 APR 2000

HD-17 U.S.-funded lab opened in Russia 219

MOSCOW, APRIL 6. The U.S. and Russian officials opened a \$ 18.5-million U.S.-funded laboratory to help eliminate chemical weapons yesterday, but the spirit of cooperation was overshadowed by the arrest of a U.S. citizen for spying.

The laboratory, in a high security chemicals institute, is the first step towards building a weapons destruction complex in the Ural mountains, where a seventh of Russia's huge arsenal of nerve, blister and choking agents are kept. The U.S. Ambassador to Russia, Mr. James Collins, hailed the opening of the unit as a mark of cooperation.

Post-cold war cooperation has the U.S. taxpayers providing vast sums to make safe both Russia's 40,000 metric tonnes of chemical arms and the U.S.' own 32,500 tonnes.

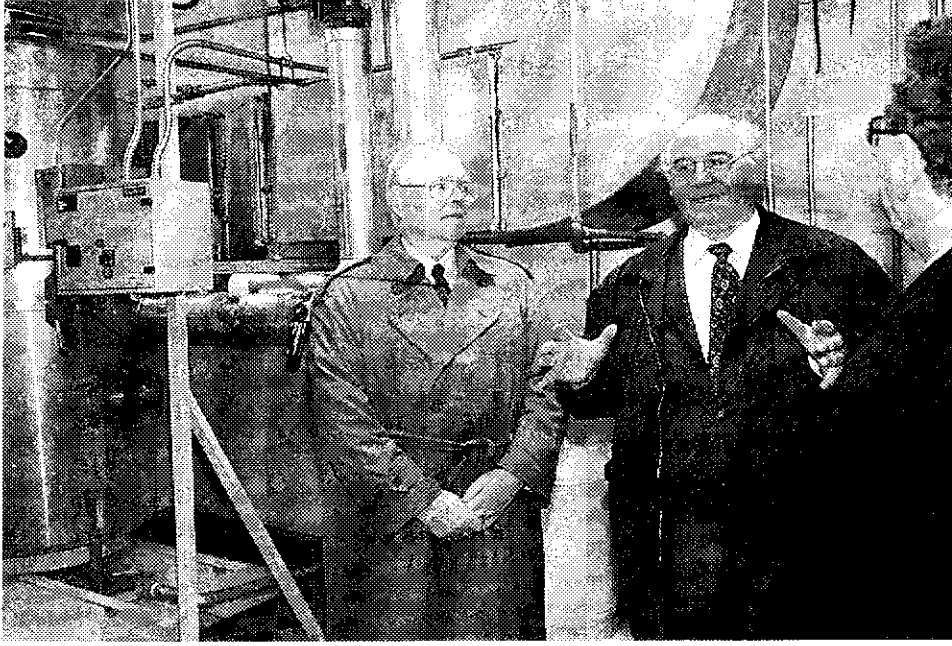
Moscow has said it cannot afford to foot the bill alone and has also asked for help in decommissioning 24 sites producing anything from Sarin nerve agent to mustard gas.

"Nerve agents are very lethal -- one drop can kill," said Mr. Miguel Morales, a spokesman for the U.S.-funded Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme (CTR). "And Russian nerve agents are more lethal than those of the U.S." When Moscow ratified an international ban on chemical weapons in 1997, officials estimated destroying its stockpiles would cost \$ 5 billions over 10 years.

The new laboratory is a high technology catacomb of whirring pipes and spotless white rooms housed in a brick building, incongruous next to the decaying concrete of the complex. Its aim is to train scientists and build monitoring equipment.

Destroying Russian chemical weapons, mounted in bombs, missiles, spray tanks and bulk containers, is complicated by welded construction making it impossible to 'unscrew' them, as is the case for U.S. weapons.

The Director of Russia's munitions agency, Mr. Zinovi Pak, said Moscow would not be able to destroy the 400 tonnes of weapons by



The U.S. Ambassador, Mr. James Collins (left), listens to Mr. Zinovy Pak, head of Russia's Munition Agency, at the opening of an American-funded laboratory in Moscow on Wednesday. — AP

the end of this month as laid out in the international chemical weapons ban.

Mr. Pak said Moscow had allocated 590 million roubles (\$ 20.5 millions) for chemical weapons destruction this year. His U.S. counterpart, Gen. Thomas Kuenning, said the U.S. and Russian experts had worked excellently together. — Reuters

Arrest chills relations

Telegraph reports:

Relations between Russia and America faced a new trial following the arrest of the American citizen. Searches had unearthed

technical drawings, records of conversations with scientists and receipts for payments made to Russian citizens, proving the American's interest in State secrets, the FSB claimed. According to the Russian media, the suspect was arrested just before he boarded a train for a rendezvous with his MI6 controller in the Baltic republic of Estonia.

The man, yet to be identified, had allegedly been asked to provide information about ways of cultivating top politicians and about links between different Russian intelligence services.

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- 7 APR 2000

U.S.-funded lab opened in Russia to help destroy chemical arms

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ing vast sums to make safe both Russia's 40,000 metric tonnes of chemical arms and the U.S. own 32,500 tonnes.

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agents are more lethal than those of the U.S."

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The new laboratory is a high technology catcomb of whirling pipes and spotless white rooms housed in a brick building, incongruous next to the decaying concrete of the complex. Its aim is to train scientists and build monitoring equipment. "When you're destroying chemical weapons, you want to make sure they're completely destroyed," Mr Morales said.

Destroying Russian chemical weapons, mounted in bombs, missiles, spray tanks and bulk containers, is complicated by welded construction making it impossible to "unscrew" them, as is the case for U.S. weapons.

Zigjovi Pak, the director of Rus-

sia's Munitions Agency, welcomed the new facility, but said Moscow would not be able to destroy the 400 tonnes of weapons by the end of this month as laid out in the international chemical weapons ban.

"We will do everything to meet the second deadline — we need to destroy 8,000 tonnes by April 29, 2002," he said. Russia has started work on building one weapons disposal site at Gornoye on the Volga river and the U.S. has pledged to build a site at Shebuchiye in the Ural Mountains.

Adolph Ernst, project manager for CTRP, said the total U.S. contribution to destroying Russia's chemical arsenal would amount to \$888 million over 10 years.

But he said the U.S. congress had given no money in fiscal year 2000 for construction — contributions are reviewed annually.

"They wanted examples of Russia working in a more co-operative spirit," he said. (Reuters)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

7 APR 2000

Putin to monitor US arms cuts

BY RON POPESKI

Moscow, April 15: President-elect Vladimir Putin said on Saturday Russia would only remove nuclear missiles from active service once it was satisfied Washington was meeting its arms control treaty obligations. Interfax news agency reported.

Mr Putin, who is about to set off on his first foreign trip with a newly ratified arms pact under his belt, said: "We will observe very carefully how our partners are fulfilling their obligations. Not a single missile will be removed from active service before the end of its normal lifetime if we see that our partners are not fulfilling their obligations at the same level." Mr Putin told reporters a day after the Russian Parliament ratified the long-delayed START-2 disarmament pact. The passage of the treaty was a diplomatic triumph for Mr Putin, who leaves on Sunday for Britain on his first foreign trip since

taking over from Mr Boris Yeltsin on New Year's Eve. He will make stops in two important former Soviet republics, Belarus on the way to London and Ukraine on the way back.

Mr Putin was quoted by Interfax as saying the visit to Britain was in response to Prime Minister Tony Blair's "willingness to cooperate with Russia. We must reciprocate, and that is why my first visit to Western Europe is to Britain."

But Mr Blair, who met Mr Putin even before his election at a high-profile encounter in St. Petersburg, made plain in his weekly Internet message that he intended to take the Russian leader to task over alleged human rights excesses in Chechnya.

Western countries are urging the Kremlin to investigate alleged human rights abuses in the breakaway region and negotiate with the rebels it has been hunting down for more than six months. Politicians and observers said on Friday's overwhelming ratification vote in Parlia-

ment, clinched after Mr Putin made an impassioned appeal to the state Duma Lower House would enhance his authority in areas well beyond foreign policy.

The Duma, which had resisted all attempts by Mr Putin's predecessor Mr Boris Yeltsin to secure approval of the 1993 accord, voted in favour by 288 votes to 131. Only the Communists, well back in both the parliamentary and presidential elections resisted, along with their Agrarian allies. Mr Putin, elected on the first ballot of an early poll last month, is to be inaugurated on May 7. His decision to take foreign trips reversed a convention that, as both President and Prime Minister, he could not leave Russia. In his comments to reporters, Mr Putin also said that if the United States failed to observe the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, a cornerstone of Russian defence policy, Moscow reserved the right to take measures on the use of its nuclear arsenal. (Reuters)

Russia soon to be second biggest arms exporter

Moscow, April 15: Russia will become the world's second biggest arms exporter after the United States within "two or three years" according to the country's deputy prime minister who is also overseeing the arms sales in the Soviet Union, Mr Ilya Klebanov.

"At the moment, we are in fourth place after the United States, Britain and France," Mr Klebanov said on Friday upon his return from a trip to Malaysia where he attended an International Arms Show which is the second biggest in the world.

Mr Klebanov ruled out Russia regaining the top spot, once held by the Soviet Union, but reaffirmed his January prediction about arms export saying that "arms exports will bring the country \$4.3 billion."

If achieved, that figure would be a record since the collapse of the Soviet Union economy in 1991 due to the political and social upheavals prevalent at that time. "Our target for next year is \$5 billion," Interfax quoted Mr Klebanov as saying in an interview to be published on Saturday by the *Kommersant* daily.

"It is a large sum, and if we continue doing as well as we have, we will rank as the world's second largest arms exporter after the United States in two or three years if everything goes well," Mr Klebanov added.

Mr Klebanov hailed the success of the 22 Russian companies presenting their products at the arms show which is Asia's largest and the world's second biggest after Dubai. (AFP)



NUCLEAR QUESTION: Russian President-elect Vladimir Putin at a meeting in Moscow on Saturday. Mr Putin said on Saturday that Russia would remove nuclear missiles from active service only once it was satisfied Washington was meeting its arms control treaty obligations, Interfax news agency reported. (Reuters)

Soviet pop drowns out the Duma disarmament debate

BY ANDREI SHUKSHIN

Moscow, April 15: Soviet-era pop music wafted through the corridors of Russia's state Duma Lower House of Parliament as members, closeted inside the chamber, pondered cuts in the country's heavy ballistic missile arsenal.

An ageing diva sang of the torment of unrequited love, drowning out the objections of Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, who took the floor on Friday in a last-ditch attempt to stop parliamentarians ratifying the landmark start-2 treaty.

The musical background was part of a veil of secrecy that surrounded the Duma debate on Moscow subscribing to the 1993 treaty with the United States, cutting the number of nuclear warheads for each side from 6,000 to no more than 3,500 on each side by 2007. Officials piped popular old-hits fm station radio retro into the lobby and corridors to keep journalists

from catching even a fleeting word of the debate, ostensibly stuffed with state secrets.

It might also have made some members, like Mr Zyuganov, a staunch opponent of the treaty, nostalgic for the cold war days when Moscow never had to worry about financial difficulties in maintaining and expanding its nuclear arsenal.

Security guards sealed rooms adjacent to the debating chamber and ushered reporters out of a press hall, also next door, where presumably they might be able to eavesdrop. Two toilets deemed to be dangerously in the vicinity of the main hall were also declared out of bounds. Journalists were even turfed out of their permanent offices in the Duma, as the rooms shared a wall with the chamber. Television monitors normally showing debates live went dark. Army generals and solemn ministers, followed later by president-elect Vladimir Putin, filed past journalists eager to be told anything about the forthcoming vote. (Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

16 APR 2001

Clinton, Putin agree on summit soon

Moscow, April 16

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin and US President Bill Clinton have agreed to hold a summit ahead of the G8 gathering of leading industrial nations in Japan at the end of July, the Russian Presidential Press Service said today.

The date and venue of the summit will be worked out when Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov visits Washington on April 26, Interfax news agency reported.

Clinton telephoned Putin yesterday evening to congratulate him on the ratification of the Start II treaty on nuclear disarmament by the Russian Parliament on Friday, Interfax news agency reported.

The two leaders agreed on the need for early talks on a successor

Start III agreement to reduce nuclear warheads, Interfax said.

Putin was due to arrive in Britain today on his first foreign trip since his election last month.

White House spokesman Jake Siewert said Clinton talked by phone to Putin for about ten minutes.

The US President is reported to have told him that the Russian Parliament's approval of the treaty on Friday was "an important

step forward toward the reduction

of nuclear arms."

President Bill Clinton also told Putin he hoped they could meet

before the Okinawa summit meeting in July of leaders of the group of seven major industrialised democracies plus Russia.

No date was given for such a meeting but speculation has been that Clinton might go to Moscow in late May or early June during a previously scheduled European trip.

Siewert said Clinton told Putin that he hoped the two countries

could seek deeper nuclear reductions through a Start-III treaty. Putin, after the Russian Parliament, or Duma, acted, had said the nuclear arms control ball was now in Washington's court.

Start-II is the acronym for the Second Strategic Arms Reduction Talks treaty, which was signed seven years ago in January 1993 and ratified by the US Senate in 1996.

Under Start-2, the United States and Russia agreed to cut the number of nuclear warheads from 6,000 to no more than 3,500 on each side by 2007.

Russian and American negotiators are scheduled to meet for two days in Geneva next week to discuss launching Start-3 negotiations on deeper cuts.

(Agencies)



THE HINDUSTAN TIME

17 APR 2000

Nothing new in doctrine: U.S.

WASHINGTON, APRIL 22. The U.S. has said Russia's new military doctrine contained no new elements likely to raise concern among U.S. policymakers. *10/2/28/9*

"We've been following this debate in Russia very closely, and we don't believe there's any dramatic new departure," the State Department spokesman, Mr. James Rubin, said yesterday.

Russia's powerful Security Council yesterday approved a tough new military doctrine which reaffirms the right to be the first to deliver a nuclear strike.

However, U.S. officials have found the document consistent with Russia's post-Soviet nuclear stance, which allows it to use nuclear weapons first, according to the State Department. — AFP

THE HINDU

23 APR 20

U.S. and Russia may find concluding START pact tough

By Jal Taraporevala

MUMBAI: The review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in New York next week and the recent ratification by the Russian Duma of the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty or START-2 have focused attention on how the process of controlling N-weapons is likely to proceed in the coming months. Both Moscow and Washington have stated that they would like to intensify the search for a START-3 agreement in the near future.

On account of Russia's economic problems, it would make financial and logistical sense for it to try and move towards a START-3 accord. For the U.S., safety fears and concerns about the maintenance standards of the Russian N-arsenal will be the primary motivation for commencing serious discussions on a new strategic agreement. In any

case, Moscow's proposal to reduce warheads on both sides to nearly 1,500 under START-3 will still leave the two nations with a nuclear stockpile that is many more times that of any other N-power.

But concluding any new START agreement could take time, given the nature of the issues to be resolved — the precise extent of the cuts in the number of warheads, the missile systems that will be permit-

NEWS ANALYSIS

ted and the timing, procedure and verification provisions of any new treaty.

More important, the entire process of arms control, including the implementation of START-2, could receive a serious setback if the U.S. decides to go ahead in developing the National Missile Defence (NMD) system.

Russia, which lacks the financial and technological resources to

compete with the U.S. in developing an effective nuclear defence system, will continue to insist that the NMD project will violate the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty.

The Clinton administration, which is due to announce its decision on whether to develop the NMD in June, is facing conflicting pressures on the issue.

On the one hand, supporters argue that the NMD is a realistic option since it does not envisage the exotic space-based laser technology associated with the earlier Strategic Defence Initiative and that it could, in time, provide an effective shield against a limited nuclear attack.

On the other hand, however, all but one of the tests which have been conducted so far have failed, the cost of the project will be at least \$13 billion and Russia's response to the NMD system will continue to be highly critical.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

23 APR 2000

SA face N-tell off Russia, U

"We are going into the meeting without many lights in the window in terms of showing progress and showing that the Russian bargain between clear and non-nuclear states being respected," the Canadian foreign minister, Mr. Lloyd Axworthy, told reporters. The US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, was to have been among the first to speak this afternoon. She needed to submit a written oral defence of US disarmament since the end of the Cold War. Her spokesman, Mr. Jeffrey Rubin, said on Monday that Washington had

"led the way amongst the nuclear powers in trying to reverse the nuclear arms race".

But many non-nuclear nations believe the two big atomic powers have no true strategy for disarmament and have found ways around reduction agreements to maintain their arsenals.

India and Pakistan, who blasted their way into the nuclear club in May 1998 by conducting atomic tests, are not expected to escape criticism either. India and Pakistan as well as Israel and Cuba are the only four nations not to have joined the treaty.

REUTERS

UNHQ, April 24. -- Most countries in the world are expected to tell the USA and Russia today they are endangering the earth's safety by deploying and stockpiling far too many nuclear weapons.

Moscow's decision to store rather than destroy 20,000 non-strategic or tactical nuclear weapons is bound to cause concern along with US plans to refurbish its reserve of 2,500-3,000 warheads after START II's limit of 3,500 deployed warheads for each side is activated.

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THE STATESMAN

25 APR 2000

Russia slams US plans to deploy ABM system

RUSSIA HAS sharply attacked the American decision to deploy an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system, warning that it could undermine the "complex and quite fragile" structure of nuclear arms control agreements.

Apparently referring to Nato strikes on Yugoslavia, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov also criticised attempts to build national stability at the expense of other states and "misappropriation" of the right to use force "in violation of the UN Charter and the international law."

Stressing that Moscow was prepared for deeper cuts in the number of nuclear warheads during next phase of negotiations, Ivanov told the NPT conference the historic chance of nuclear disarmament could be missed if the Americans go ahead with the deployment in violation of the 1972 ABM treaty. "Further reduction in the strategic offensive weapons can only be considered in the context of preservation of the ABM treaty," he emphasised.

PTI, United Nations

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

27 APR 2000

U.S.-Russia talks fail ¹⁵ 29/4

WASHINGTON: U.S. and Russia have failed to narrow down their differences over arms control amid reports that Moscow has offered to revive an informal 1997 agreement which only allows Washington to build a limited missile defence system.

After holding two-hours of wide-ranging talks here on arms control, Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, however, called for resolving their differences, particularly on the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty (ABM), an accord which has become a bone of contention between the two sides.

"Obviously, we do not agree on all the issues," Albright told reporters even as Ivanov, who met Texas governor and Republican contender for presidency George

Bush and other legislators on Thursday, reiterated that Washington should reduce its missile defence system as is being done by Moscow.

As the informal agreement of 1997 goes, it would make it difficult for the U.S. to protect itself against long-range missiles.

Ivanov warned that if the U.S. builds long-range anti-missile system, it will destroy the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty and abort treaties that have reduced Moscow's nuclear warhead stockpiles from up to 40,000 nuclear bombs each in 1988 to about 7,000 each today.

Ivanov pointed out that START II would reduce it further, and Russia is also prepared for a START III treaty reducing the warheads down to 1,500 each. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

29 APR 2001

Russia flays Clinton's decision to visit Pak

Moscow, March 13

RUSSIA HAS sharply criticised US President Bill Clinton's decision to include Pakistan in his itinerary during his visit to South Asia beginning next week saying that there had been no improvement in the situation in that country, ever since the military overthrew the democratic Government, to warrant such a visit.

"Till yesterday, Washington was threatening to include Pakistan in the list of terrorist states. What has changed since then that has led the United States administration to include Pakistan in Mr Clinton's South Asia itinerary, the 'Voice of Russia' said in a commentary last

night. "The military continues to rule the country and deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is languishing in jail," the radio said.

"Pakistan's aggressive posture in the region has sharpened ever since the military overthrew the democratically-elected Government of Nawaz Sharif," it said.

Pointing out to Pakistan's continued recruitment of national and foreign mercenaries in the training camps there, the radio said. "Besides the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, these recruits have registered their presence in 'hot spots' in Yugoslavian provinces, Central Asian states, Chechnya." (UNI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
14 MAR 2000

Russia: US violating arms control pact

Fred Weir

Moscow, March 16

WASHINGTON forced the USSR to close down a large phased-array radar installation under construction in the Siberian territory of Krasnoyarsk, on the grounds that it could be used to target American missiles in flight and therefore violated the ABM Accord.

Russian experts say the US-built radar station that was placed at Vardo in Norway four years ago is of the same type as the Krasnoyarsk facility, and could be part of an integrated missile defence for the continental USA.

"There is no doubt the Vardo radar installation's main purpose is to be part of an ABM system," Leonid Ivashov, head of the Defence Ministry's international department said.

American and Norwegian officials insist that the Vardo facility is used only for tracking orbital debris in space, and has no military function. Ironically, that's exactly what the former Soviet leaders said publicly about the Krasnoyarsk radar installation before they agreed to close it down.

Former US President Ronald Reagan championed the idea of anti-missile defence in the 1980s to trump the Soviet Union's nuclear forces. But before serious work could begin on the so-called 'Star Wars' network the Cold War

ended.

At that time, more than a decade ago, experts warned that anti-missile defence was not technically feasible, and that attempts to construct such a system could lead to an unrestricted arms race with the USSR.

President Bill Clinton has revived the idea of ABM defence for North America, despite the disappearance of the Soviet threat, arguing that international terrorism and newly-nuclearised states present a fresh menace. He is expected to sign the project into law this June.

"The Americans want to break out of the ABM treaty for economic reasons, because military development is their way of subsidising high-tech research," says Nikolai Zyubov, an independent analyst. "They also calculate that missile defence will make Russia's nuclear deterrent obsolete, and therefore leave the US as the world's only superpower."

Analysts say Russia's public objections to the Vardo radar station may be just the opening move in a long struggle with Washington to try to prevent the collapse of the ABM Treaty.

"Without this treaty, the whole framework of arms control, built painstakingly over the past three decades, will fall apart," says Mr Goltz.

Russia protests US diplomats meeting Chechen leader

ASSOCIATED PRESS and UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MOSCOW, Feb. 17. — Russia today strongly protested against the meeting between US diplomats and a Chechen separatist leader, calling Washington's move "unfriendly" and "absolutely unacceptable". Chechen Parliament speaker, Mr Seifim Beshayev, met State Department officials at Washington on Monday.

Moscow has reacted harshly to western criticism of its offensive in the breakaway region, saying other countries should not receive Chechen representatives, whom it considers illegitimate.

The Russian foreign ministry, today said "We can see the meeting with Beshayev, as only an unfriendly step regarding Russia, which cannot be justified by any internal political considerations. We expect the US administration to avoid any official contacts with representatives of Chechen terrorists and to follow its declarations about adherence to a joint fight against international terrorism."

Meanwhile a Putin aide has remarked the resumption of relations between Russia and Nato will in no way alter the country's policy towards Chechnya. "Our Chechnya policy is and will remain same," said Mr Sergei Yaswizhembzky, commenting on the ongoing visit of Nato secretary-general, Mr George Robertson to Moscow. "Nato must strictly adhere to the norms of international conduct as laid by the UN charter, which it flagrantly violated by carrying out barbaric attacks on Yugoslavia." Voice of Russia quoted him as saying.

Kremlin, which snapped relations with Nato more than one-and-half-years back, has welcomed Mr Robertson's talks with Russian leaders. It considers the resumption of bilateral relations between the two as strategically important, the radio reported.

Russia batters rebel strongholds: Russian warplanes and artillery battered Chechen rebel strongholds in southern Chechnya today, striking deep in the mountains to uproot separatist fighters from their hide-outs.

FID. 1
2072

Russia slams U.S. over Chechnya

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, FEB. 19. Moscow has fired another salvo in its pitched war of words with the United States over Chechnya, accusing Washington of "information terrorism" and rejecting charges of massive human rights violations in the rebel republic.

The Russian Foreign Ministry issued an angry statement Friday taking to task the U.S. State Department spokesman, Mr. James Rubin, who called for a thorough investigation into what he described as "numerous credible reports of civilian killings and alleged misconduct by (Russian) soldiers" in Chechnya.

Moscow said that the tone and content of Mr. Rubin's remarks were "absolutely unacceptable" and amounted to "assistance in information terrorism."

The Russian Foreign Ministry accused Mr. Rubin of "operating with clearly tendentious data and even outright misinformation supplied by the terrorists themselves." Moscow called Washington's concern over human rights violations in Chechnya a case of "the pot calling the kettle black."

"It is hardly appropriate when the issue of Chechens' humanitarian sufferings is being fanned out by those who rained hundreds of thousand bombs and missiles on the people of Yugoslavia and who are still bombing innocent children, women and old men in Iraq, those who did not say a word in support of the 700,000 Russians forced to flee terror in Chechnya

and who are watching in silence the sufferings of 200,000 Serb refugees from Kosovo," the Russian statement said.

The Russian outburst came a day after the New York-based Human Rights Watch accused Russian forces in Chechnya of "torturing, beating, and on occasion raping Chechen civilians at a 'filtration camp' inside Chechnya." Bowing to international pressure to investigate human rights abuses in Chechnya Moscow on Friday appointed a special envoy to investigate complaints against the Russian military.

In an interview on Saturday the envoy, Mr. Vladimir Kalamonov, conceded that it was "impossible to say that human rights have been completely respected in Chechnya" and promised to set up a trustworthy framework for dealing with complaints.

Moscow is also under pressure to investigate the fate of a Russian journalist working for Radio Liberty, Mr. Andrei Babitsky, who was detained in Chechnya by Russian forces last month and then allegedly handed over to Chechen rebels in exchange for five Russian servicemen.

Russian chopper shot down Reuters reports:

Rebels have shot down a Russian helicopter in the breakaway region of Chechnya, killing 15 troops, Interfax news agency quoted Interior Minister Mr. Vladimir Rushailo as saying today.

THE HINDU
20 FEB 2000

US, Russia in talks to avert accidental nuclear disaster

Nick Macfie

SINGAPORE 31 DECEMBER

JUST HOURS before the year 2000 dawns in the western Pacific, US and Russian military experts sat down to prevent the biggest millennium bug nightmare of them all — an accidental nuclear attack.

The Centre for Year 2000 Strategic Stability began operations on the grounds of the Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, manned by military personnel from the United States and Russia.

They will monitor nuclear missile launch warning systems to avoid any catastrophic accident prompted by a Y2K bug.

The millennium bug stems from mainly older computer systems programmed to read only the last two digits of a year. If the glitch is left uncorrected, systems could misread 2000 as 1900, causing systems to malfunction, or even crash. Russia tells people to relax: Meanwhile, Russia kept up its flow of positive Y2K vibes on Thursday, saying everything from the Mir space station to the country's lifeline railway network would be immune to the millennium computer bug.

Western nations say Russia, home to nine Soviet-era atomic power plants and thousands of nuclear missiles, was one of those most at risk when January 1,

2000, arrives. A glitch means some computers may read 2000 as 1900 and crash or malfunction. Russian electricity firm RAO UES said people should not try to save energy as a Y2K precaution because it could give the wrong impression about generating needs.

"UES earnestly asked citizens not to overload their minds with global problems and to direct

their energies to greeting the New Year happily," Iyar-Tass news agency reported. On Wednesday, Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov, who heads Russia's Y2K task force, said he was sure all would go smoothly.

Other officials gave similarly upbeat reports on Thursday as crunch time neared in the world's largest country.

— Reuters

PRESIDENT'S MILLENNIUM GIFT

Yeltsin resigns

Moscow

31 DECEMBER



RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin said in a television announcement on Friday that he intended to resign before the end of his term next year.

"I am going. I am going earlier than my established time," Mr Yeltsin said in a broadcast on state-owned ORT television. He said Russia needed to go into the new century with new political leaders.

Mr Yeltsin spoke slowly and calmly as he announced his resignation on the last day of the 20th century.

Mr Yeltsin, 68, has dominated Russian politics since he became President in 1991, leading Russia from the wreck of the former Soviet Union into a new era of democracy.

"Today (Friday) on the last day of the old century I am going to resign," he said. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, a man he has already named as his preferred successor, would be acting President for three months ahead of elections, he said. Mr Yeltsin's term was due to end in six months but he said he did not want to hold on to power.

— Reuters

The Economic Times

1 JAN 2000

US salutes democracy

Washington, Dec. 31 (AP): US President Bill Clinton, responding to the dramatic resignation of Boris Yeltsin, paid tribute to the Russian leader for dismantling a communist system and putting a democratic structure in place.

Clinton, in a statement, said his succession by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is evidence of Yeltsin's constitutional achievements.

"We have had our differences, such as on Chechnya, but President Yeltsin and my starting point has always been how Russia and the United States could work together to advance common interests," Clinton said, while extending his and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's warmest wishes to Yeltsin and his family.

He cited as "genuine progress" the dismantling of thousands of US and Russian long-range nuclear weapons and Russian peace-keeping troops in the Balkans.

"In this spirit, I look forward to working with acting President Putin as the Russian people begin this process of making the transition from one democratically elected President to the other," the statement concluded.

At the state department, an official said secretary of state Madeleine Albright telephoned foreign minister Igor Ivanov who assured her

that Russian foreign policy would remain on a steady course.

The White House called Yeltsin's resignation dramatic, but not a complete surprise.

Clinton was notified before dawn by Sandy Berger, his assistant for national security affairs. After Yeltsin's resignation was confirmed in contacts with Russian officials, a White House spokesman, James Fallin, said "we consider this a dramatic step."

"While there is an element of surprise it was not a complete one," Fallin said.

The White House official cited numerous speculative reports in the Russian press for several months about the 68-year-old Yeltsin's health problems.

Yeltsin appeared pale as he told the Russian people in a nationally televised speech about his decision.

Putin, who will take over as President, is known to US officials as a businesslike professional. He is also identified, though, with the drive by Russian forces against the restive republic of Chechnya.

Yeltsin has faced allegations of corruption in recent months and was reportedly seeking assurances that he and his family would be protected when he steps aside.

THE TELEGRAPH
1 JAN 2000

U.S. keen to work with Putin, says Albright

WASHINGTON, JAN. 3. ^{W. A. Y. M.} The United States regards Russia's new acting President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, as someone with whom it can do business, the U.S. Secretary of State, Ms Madeleine Albright, said on Monday. ^{HD-14}

Speaking on NBC, Ms Albright emphasised that it was important to have a "productive relationship with the Russians." She dismissed any talk of a new cold war even though Mr. Putin — who became acting President on Friday following the surprise resignation of Mr Boris Yeltsin — has advocated a sharp increase in Russia's defence spending.

"We've got to be really careful here not to create an enemy ... It's very important," she said, describing Mr. Putin as "a tough person ... Somebody who is very determined, action-oriented. I think we're going to have to watch his actions very carefully."

Ms Albright said while the U.S. has condemned Russia's "wanton action against civilians" in the Chechnya conflict, Washington understood Russia's concerns to counter a movement which appeared to have been responsible for bombings of buildings in Moscow. She said a decision "hasn't been made" on whether Washington would go ahead with building a new missile defence system without Russian cooperation in re-writing the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty.

U.S. officials want to modify the treaty, while Russia opposes any changes. "The decision to deploy is something that (U.S. President Bill Clinton) will be making later in the summer," Ms Albright said. — AFP

US lukewarm to Russia's revised nuclear doctrine

Washington, January 15

RUSSIA'S UNVEILING of the revised nuclear doctrine in the wake of "growing" level of "threats in the military sphere" has evoked a muted response from the US.

"The US takes the issue of nuclear weapons very seriously and we're monitoring the situation with their new security doctrine," a Pentagon official said. Since Russia "has not published it, we have not had an opportunity to review it (doctrine)," he said.

The revised nuclear doctrine adopted by acting President Vladimir Putin asserts that Russia reserved the right to use "all forces and equipment at its disposal, including nuclear weapons, if it has to repel armed aggression, if all other means of resolving the crisis have been exhausted or have proved ineffective."

Stating that a number of states were trying to weaken and marginalise Russia, the doctrine said "the level and scale of threats in the military sphere is growing."

Under the previous policy, framed under President Boris

Yeltsin, Russia had said it would resort to nuclear weapons only if its very existence was threatened.

Stating that the current trend was for a "unipolar" world dominated by the US, the document said Moscow favoured a "multi-polar" world in which Russia's voice was backed up by its military arsenal.

'IRAN MAY ORDER 3 ADDL N-REACTORS': Iran may order an additional three N-reactors for power generation from Russia, a top Russian official said today after meeting an Iranian Government representative. If formalized, the deal is likely to upset US officials, who have strongly protested Russia's assistance to the Iranian N-programme. US accuses Iran of attempting to build weapons of mass destruction. But Russia and Iran have largely ignored Washington's protests and say their cooperation is legal and peaceful.

EMERGENCY LANDING: A copter carrying one of the commanders in charge of Russian troops in Chechnya was forced to make an emergency landing near Grozny after being hit by fire from Chechen fighters. (Agencies)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
16 JAN 2000

Russia slams Clinton over Chechnya

*us - Russia
HD-15*

MOSCOW, JAN. 28. Russia today criticised the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton's characterisation of its war in Chechnya as 'cruel and self-defeating', saying the comment was a fresh sign of the west's lack of understanding.

The Government's new Chechnya spokesman, Mr. Sergei Yastrzhembsky, was quoted by Itar-Tass news agency as saying: "the real causes of what is happening in the Chechen republic are still not fully understood in the west."

"(The west) tries to look at events in Chechnya through the prism of its own fixed idea of how the struggle against terrorism should be waged," Mr. Yastrzhembsky, the man charged with improving the image of the offensive, said.

In Moscow, the Russian security services started taking urgent measures to counter possible rebel attacks from Chechnya, where a pro-Russian Chechen leader said he would hold talks with rebel commanders in Grozny.

Gen. Gennady Troshch, senior Russian commander, said only a handful of civilians were left in Chechnya's war-torn capital, dealing head on with a subject which has particularly concerned the west. Most had been taken to Russian-controlled areas, he said.

Amid fears of fresh terrorist at-

tacks in Russia, Mr. Alexander Zdanovich, spokesman for the FSB domestic security agency, told NTV television Moscow would increase security.

His comments followed a statement by a leading Muslim guerrilla commander threatening to launch lightning strikes similar to those which cut heavily into Russia's advance early in the new year.

Russia launched its offensive in Chechnya after devastating bomb blasts rocked Moscow and other cities. It blamed the attacks on Chechen rebels, who swiftly denied the charges.

The U.N. Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in Moscow for talks with the Acting President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, expressed concern over the four-month military drive.

"Mr. Kofi Annan said that the efforts of the Russian authorities to fight terrorism in the North Caucasus are understandable and enjoy support, but the question also arises of the humanitarian situation," said Mr. Sergei Prikhodko, deputy head of the presidential administration.

The NATO Secretary-General, Lord George Robertson, in Ukraine, also called for an end to the fighting. — Reuters

THE HINDU
29 JAN 2000