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Weapons of Mass Destruction Nuclear Weapons

The 2002 Nuclear Posture Review: A First Step in Transformation or Just a Paper Tiger?

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Abstract: In January 2002, the Bush Administration delivered the second Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) to Congress; the first such review was completed in 1994 Long before the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks against New York City and Washington, D.C., the Defense Department's senior civilian and military

leaders began an unprecedented debate and discussion about where America's military should go and what it should look like in the years ahead. Out of those debates, senior civilian and military leaders agreed on the urgent need for substantive changes in our defense strategy. The outline of those changes was reflected in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review Report as well as in the 2003 Defense Department budget request. Administration officials claim that the 2002 NPR paves the way for a major change in our deterrent strategy and that it provides a blueprint for transforming our strategic posture Critics contend that the review is flawed, that it creates new roles for nuclear weapons, and that it still translates into the maintenance and sustainment of a large nuclear arsenal. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, compare and contrast it with the 1994 NPR, and evaluate whether it advances current Defense Department's transformation.

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Limitations: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Description: Strategy research project

Pages: 36

Report Date: 09 DEC 2002

Report Number: A203614

Keywords relating to this report:

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