

In the Middle East, America's Exit from Iraq Attracts Less Interest than Gathering War Clouds

DEBKAFile Exclusive Military Analysis

Since April 2007, George W. Bush has had on his desk an exit plan from Iraq, built around the phased pull-back by early 2008 of a little more than half of the 170,000 or so troops there at present.

Building up in Persian Gulf waters as a key element of this post-withdrawal military plan are three American carriers and their strike groups. The USS Enterprise CVN 65 Big E Strike Group departed for the region Monday, July 8, to join the USS Stennis and USS Nimitz carriers which are already there.

<http://www.debka.com/article.php?aid=1291>

RUSSIA SUSPENDS ARMS CONTROL PACT

JULY 14. Russian President Vladimir Putin has suspended the application of a key Cold War arms control treaty. Mr Putin signed a decree citing "exceptional circumstances" affecting security as the reason for the move.

Russia has been angered by US plans to base parts of a missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic.

The 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) limits the number of heavy weapons deployed between the Atlantic Ocean and the Urals mountains.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6898690.stm>