

# CHAPTER 1

## COUNTER-PROLIFERATION AND US NUCLEAR STRATEGY

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The George W. Bush administration took office with a strong agenda to change and revitalize the US nuclear posture. In a speech to the National Defense University in May 2001, President Bush said he would “change the size, the composition, the character of our nuclear forces in a way that reflects the reality that the Cold War is over.”<sup>1</sup> He said his goal was to “move quickly to reduce nuclear forces” and he was “committed to achieving a credible deterrent with the lowest-possible number of nuclear weapons consistent with our national security needs.”<sup>2</sup>

This ‘change’ has mainly been understood to relate to Russia, which the administration says is no longer an “immediate contingency” for US nuclear planning.<sup>3</sup> Officials often describe this shift as the most significant change in US nuclear policy since the end of the Cold War permitted retirement of some excess US nuclear capabilities. As a result, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) completed at the end of 2001 continued the drawdown of nuclear forces that was initiated in 1991 by implementing force structure decisions made in the 1992 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II) Agreement, the 1994 NPR and the 1997 Helsinki Framework. This included a retirement of the Peacekeeper intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and four ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) and a trimming of the remaining warheads to a START III-like force level of roughly 5,400 warheads, of which no more than 2,200 could be operationally deployed strategic warheads. Today, nearly two decades after the Cold War ended, we’re still in that drawdown phase of the 1990s. Yet Russia is still the main focus of US nuclear planning due to the sheer size of its nuclear

arsenal and retreat from democracy.

Other components of the change, however, were not drivers for nuclear cuts or a reduction of the *role* of nuclear weapons, but for an expanded role against other adversaries. One of these was China, which the 2001 NPR determined “is a country that could be involved in an immediate or potential contingency” that is “setting requirements for [US] nuclear strike capabilities” due to “the combination of China’s still developing strategic objectives and its ongoing modernization of its nuclear and non-nuclear forces.”<sup>4</sup> And in February 2006, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) determined that China “has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States” among the “major emerging powers.”<sup>5</sup> As a result of this strategic perspective, nuclear planning against China has increased, with the majority of US ballistic missile submarines patrolling in the Pacific instead of the Atlantic, and long-range bombers conducting periodic forward deployments to Guam much like they did during the Cold War.

The third component of the change was the proliferators; regional states that are seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Whereas strategic nuclear planning during the Cold War was focused on the Soviet Union, China and their allies, the discovery of Iraq’s extensive WMD program in 1991 and North Korea’s nuclear weapons program resulted in a broadening of US nuclear weapons policy and doctrine against regional proliferators themselves. Essentially overnight, the declaratory policy for what and where US nuclear forces might be employed ballooned from nuclear to WMD: nuclear, chemical, biological facilities. At times, radiological and high-explosive weapons and ballistic missiles have also been on the list. Military planners worked long hours to translate the new language into an expanded list of potential targets and new strike plans.

Up until the mid-1990s, this development was substantial but timid and often denied by officials because of the emphasis at the time on securing international support for an indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Broadening nuclear planning and targeting non-nuclear NPT members could derail the effort, but once the treaty was extended the policy gradually became more overt. The terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001

removed the last constraints as policy-makers leaped from terrorist attacks to WMD attacks as a justification for new strategic nuclear strike plans and a pre-emption doctrine against regional WMD proliferators.

The most dramatic symbol of this change was the 'Global Strike' mission assigned to US Strategic Command (STRATCOM) in January 2003. Within two months, the first strategic strike options against regional WMD proliferators were incorporated into the country's strategic nuclear war plan (Operations Plan (OP-LAN) 8044). One year later the new Global Strike plan known as Concept Plan (CONPLAN) 8022 was put into effect, providing the President with pre-emptive strike options for use against regional WMD proliferators.

The NPR was described by officials as creating a 'New Triad' in an effort to reduce the role of nuclear weapons which might not be credible against 'rogue' states, yet one of the first acts of the administration ironically was to create new nuclear strike options against those very states. These developments significantly broadened US strategic nuclear targeting from two to at least seven countries and expanded the number of options and scenarios where nuclear weapons could potentially be used. From this flowed requirements for new weapons – including nuclear weapons – to 'tailor' the deterrent against the new targets.

For the first four years of the Bush administration, Global Strike was highlighted as a prominent stand-alone strategic mission with unique capabilities. But since 2005 the mission has become much more muted and integrated into existing strategic and regional plans, to such an extent that it is sometimes hard to see where Global Strike begins and ends. Yet Global Strike has deepened a commitment to offensive, quick – even pre-emptive – strike planning.

Global Strike refers to a capability to "deliver rapid, extended-range, precision kinetic (nuclear and conventional) and non-kinetic (elements of space and information operations) effects in support of theater and national objectives."<sup>6</sup> It essentially has become synonymous with the offensive leg of the New Triad that was introduced in the 2001 NPR and is now formally a part of the US strategic war plan Operations Plan 8010 Strategic Deterrence and Global Strike. Although primarily intended as a conventional mission, Congress has been unwilling so far to fund long-range conventional prompt Global Strike weapons.

As a result, the prompt Global Strike posture today to a considerable extent remains dominated by nuclear weapons. This chapter focuses on the nuclear aspects. I have de-scribed the evolution of US nuclear doctrine in the 1990s elsewhere,<sup>7</sup> so here I will focus on the developments during the George W. Bush administration.

### **The Effect of Proliferation and Terrorism**

The NPR was nearing completion when the terrorist attacks occurred on 11 September 2001. Although the Pentagon had been planning since the 1950s to detect, deter, absorb and respond to a large-scale nuclear (and other smaller forms of) attack against the United States, the use by 19 hijackers of four US airliners as cruise missiles to strike the centre of New York and the Pentagon itself caught the military completely by surprise. As the initial shock transformed into resolve, policy planners quickly began to extrapolate from the terrorist attacks to a much greater threat of WMD attacks. Said Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz three days after the attacks:

We think that when the numbers come in we'll find that more Americans were killed on Tuesday than any single day in American history since the American Civil War, worse than any single day of World War I, any single day of World War II. It's massive. And I think that focuses the mind. It makes you think in a different way. It makes you think anew. And if it doesn't do that, then people also ought to think that given some of the weapons, kinds of weapons these terrorists are after, what we saw on September 11<sup>th</sup> could be just the beginning. We've got to put an end to it.<sup>8</sup>

"I'm not trying to be an alarmist," White House Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card, Jr. said on Fox News Sunday in early October, "but we know that these terrorist organizations, like Al Qaeda, run by Osama bin Laden and others, have probably found the means to use biological or chemical warfare."<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz declared at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the QDR a few days later,

Our challenge today is greater than winning the war against terrorism. *Today's terrorist threat is a precursor of even greater threats to come.* It is no coincidence that the states harboring, financing and otherwise assisting terrorists, are also in many cases the same states that are aggressively working to acquire nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, and the means to deliver them.<sup>10</sup>

The dice had been cast: as the country struggled to figure out who the terrorists were, key policy planners in the White House and Defense Department had already decided that regional states armed with or pursuing WMD were the culprits.

President George W. Bush's first State of the Union speech in January 2002 closely followed this mindset, declaring that Iran, Iraq and North Korea – and their terrorist allies – constituted an 'axis of evil' that was trying to acquire WMD to threaten the United States and its allies. These regimes, "pose a grave and growing danger ... and the price of indifference would be catastrophic," Bush stated. "All nations should know," he warned, that "America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security. We'll be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons."<sup>11</sup> Fourteen months later US armed forces attacked Iraq.

Some saw the terrorist attacks of 9/11 as re-affirming the need to maintain a strong nuclear deterrent. "Since the Cold War, the nation has needed its [nuclear] deterrent. Since the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, the nation has a clearer understanding of this deterrent," said Major General Timothy McMahan, the commander of the US land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles.<sup>12</sup> The NPR re-affirmed this need, but at the same time admitted that the nuclear deterrent might not be credible against smaller adversaries and certainly terrorists. By combining the nuclear deterrent with ongoing conventional counter-proliferation planning and missile defence programs, the authors presented a New Triad that the administration claimed would help reduce reliance on nuclear weapons.

Ironically, one of the first results of this effort to reduce the reliance on

nuclear weapons was an expansion of nuclear targeting policy against regional WMD proliferators. The Pentagon's NPR briefing hinted at this by stating that "in the nuclear planning context, we adopted the concept of a capabilities-based force ... which underscored the need for greater flexibility for a range of contingencies that will be harder to know."<sup>13</sup> This alleged uncertainty has become a central theme in much of what has been written about national and international security after the Cold War and 9/11, but apparently the planners knew quite well what the nuclear contingencies were.

The following month, on 28 June 2002, the military was told what this meant for nuclear planning via a new directive signed by President Bush – National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 14. This classified document laid out the new administration's nuclear weapons planning guidance and provided broad overarching directions to the military for nuclear weapons planning.<sup>14</sup> NSPD-14 made explicit a previously ambiguous policy that the United States may use nuclear weapons in response to the use of chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction against US forces or US allies.<sup>15</sup>

### **New Nuclear Strike Plans**

NSPD-14 directed the military to draw up strike plans against the rogue states. The Nuclear Posture Review had determined that North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Libya were countries that could be involved in "immediate, potential, or unexpected contingencies ... setting requirements for [US] nuclear strike capabilities." Among those, the NPR concluded, "immediate contingencies [currently] include an Iraqi attack on Israel or its neighbors, a North Korean attack on South Korea, or a military confrontation over the status of Taiwan."<sup>16</sup>

Eighteen months later, those potential adversaries were added to the strategic nuclear war plan that entered into effect on March 2003. The plan, known as OPLAN 8044 Revision 03, was a scaled-down and modified version of what was previously known as the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP). OPLAN 8044 Revision (the revision number refers to the Fiscal Year the plan enters into effect) is highly classified, but a heavily redacted "Periodic Briefing"

obtained by the author under the *Freedom of Information Act* has disclosed important de-tails.<sup>17</sup>

The 26-page declassified document, an excerpt from a 123-page STRATCOM briefing from late 2002 on the production of OPLAN 8044 Revision 03, described “notable changes” compared with the previous war plan, including the addition of a “series of ... scenario-driven ... executable options” against “regional states” armed with WMD. The names of the “regional states” were redacted from the declassified document, but three images used to illustrate the planning were not, leaving little doubt who the regional states were: one image showed a North Korean launch of a Taepo Dong 1 missile; another image showed the Libyan underground facility at Tarhuna; and the third image showed a SCUD B short-range ballistic missile. The SCUD B image was not country-specific but other declassified documents help narrow it down. The 2003 US Air Force National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC) report “Ballistic and Cruise Missile Threat” listed 12 countries with SCUD B missiles: Belarus, Bulgaria, Egypt, Iran, Kazakhstan, Libya, North Korea, Syria, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Vietnam and Yemen.<sup>18</sup> Five of these – Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea and Syria – were listed in the NPR as examples of countries that could be involved in “immediate, potential, or unexpected contingencies.”

The document states that a “target base” for the regional states was developed, but everything except the title has been withheld. The creation of a target base suggests that the planning went further than simple retaliatory punishment with one or a few weapons, but entailed broad counterforce targeting against a wide range of facilities in order to deprive the states of the ability to launch and fight with WMD in a variety of scenarios. As a result, the new plan formally broadened strategic nuclear targeting from two adversaries (Russia and China) to a total of seven.

The types of facilities targeted were also redacted from the declassified document, but other official documents indicate that they probably included WMD, hard and deeply buried facilities, political leadership, and the command and control infrastructure required for the states to execute a WMD attack against the United States or its friends and allies. The US Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (NUWEP) that entered into effect one year after OPLAN

8044 Revision 03, for example, stated that “US nuclear forces must be capable of, and be seen to be capable of, destroying those critical war-making and war-supporting assets and capabilities that a potential enemy leadership values most and that it would rely on to achieve its own objectives in a post-war world.”<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Deterrence Operations Joint Operating Concept from December 2006 describes high-value Global Strike targets as “WMD production, storage, and delivery systems, adversary decision-makers, critical command and control facilities, and adversary leadership power bases.”<sup>20</sup>

Iraq presumably disappeared from the war plan again after US forces invaded the country in March 2003 – only three weeks after OPLAN 8044 Revision 03 went into effect – and confirmed what international inspectors had already concluded; that Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction. Libya presumably disappeared after December 2003, when President Muammar Gaddafi declared that he was giving up efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction.

### **The Global Strike Mission**

Yet broadening the strategic nuclear strike plan to regional WMD proliferators was not sufficient. The attacks of 9/11 convinced the administration that deterrence might not work against rogue states and terrorists and that it was necessary to develop a war plan that went beyond retaliatory deterrence and instead focused bluntly on pre-emptive target destruction. The Defense Program Guidance (DPG) for 2004-2009 signed by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in May 2003 presented a vision of a significantly enhanced global offensive capability for the United States, creating what the document called an ability to undertake “unwarned strikes ... [to] swiftly defeat from a position of forward deterrence.” The document called for improving the US capability to strike “hardened and deeply buried targets” (HDBTs) in three rogue states simultaneously, by means of special operations capabilities, cyberwarfare, as well as accelerating the development of a ‘survivable’ earth penetrator fitted with an existing nuclear warhead. The new DPG directed the military services to



develop Concept of Operations Plans to implement a Global Strike concept with STRATCOM as the overall coordination group.<sup>21</sup>

The political framework for such a concept was provided by the National Security Strategy of the United States published by the White House in September 2002. The document publicly articulated a pre-emption doctrine against WMD that required transformation of military forces “to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients *before* they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends.”<sup>22</sup> Then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice described the motivation and philosophy behind the policy on CNN in early September 2002, when she explained with reference to Iraq’s Saddam Hussein that

The problem is that we can’t afford to be surprised.... The one decision that the president has made ... is that we don’t have the luxury of doing nothing.... The problem here is that there will always be some uncertainty about how quickly he can acquire nuclear weapons. But we don’t want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.<sup>23</sup>

Intertwining the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and worst-case WMD scenarios, Rice explained:

The single most important lesson that I’ve learned [since 9/11] is that, unfortunately, you will always be surprised about the magnitude of events; that you will be surprised, particularly in this world, with terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, at how much damage can be done by a few people; and that you should not wait to be surprised by evil people who may wish you real harm with weapons of mass destruction that would make September 11 look small in comparison.<sup>24</sup>

The National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSPD-17), signed by President Bush in September 2002, articulated a comprehensive approach to countering nuclear and other WMD. The public version of the document, published in December 2002, did not explicitly mention nuclear weapons, but the classified NSPD-17 reportedly did, declaring that, if necessary, the

United States will use nuclear weapons – even pre-emptively – against anyone using WMD against the United States, its forces abroad, and friends and allies.<sup>25</sup> The following month, on 10 January 2003, President Bush signed the Unified Command Plan (Change 2), which formally assigned<sup>26</sup> the Global Strike mission to STRATCOM.

At a first glance, calling Global Strike a new mission may seem like a misnomer. After all, the United States has deployed quick-response, extended-range, accurate global strike capabilities in support of theatre and national objectives since the early 1960s, when the first solid-fuel ICBMs and sea-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) went on alert. For decades, nuclear forces – and to some extent conventional forces – stood poised to strike anywhere in the world within minutes of receiving the launch order. Enormous effort was spent during the Cold War to ensure that ICBMs could escape their silos before the Soviet warheads arrived and bombers could get airborne within 15 minutes of the radars detecting an attack. So geared toward quick reaction was the Cold War posture that widespread concern evolved about whether the National Command Authority would have enough time to make intelligent decisions or whether escalation and World War III would follow almost automatically. It was to a considerable extent this danger of the Cold War posture and the global apocalyptic devastation that would result that triggered demands for arms control and constraint.

Yet Global Strike deepened a commitment to keeping forces on high alert and to considerably shortened execution timelines. Statements made by officials and numerous planning and policy documents make it clear that Global Strike was intended for rapid pre-emptive and preventive target destruction rather than retaliatory deterrence. Global Strike capabilities might be used for ‘out-of-the-blue’ attacks against one or a small group of targets in a crisis even before armed hostilities have broken out, or it might involve using a small number of stealth platforms to ‘kick down the door’ into a highly defended area to pave the way for larger military operations.<sup>27</sup> To that end, the Global Strike mission appears to have gone beyond deterrence and dissuasion and instead focuses bluntly on target destruction.

### **Concept Plan 8022: Pre-emption Focus**

The operationalization of Global Strike has taken several forms since 2003 when the mission was first assigned to STRATCOM. For several years STRATCOM attempted to create a unique self-standing strike plan known as Concept Plan (CONPLAN) 8022 designed to provide the President with prompt global strike options against time-urgent targets. The initial draft plan was ready in April 2003 and completed in November 2003, less than a year after STRATCOM was assigned the Global Strike mission. Work on an updated version, known as CONPLAN 8022-02, was underway at the time, but the 02 version never made it off the drawing-board.

On 11 January 2004, STRATCOM commander Admiral James Ellis certified the readiness of the command's new Global Strike mission to the Secretary of Defense and the President, and in March 2004, Admiral Ellis told Congress that STRATCOM's achievements over the previous year included: "[d]eveloped a Global Strike Strategic Concept, validated it through a series of exercises and gained final approval of a Global Strike plan."<sup>28</sup> Lieutenant General James E. Cartwright, who at the time was Director for Force Structure, Resources, and Assessment Directorate (J-8) at the Joint Staff, and later became the successor to Admiral Ellis as head of STRATCOM, stated before the House Armed Services Committee in March 2004 that STRATCOM was "on schedule to achieve full operational capability this year. Global Strike will enable us to hold at risk emerging target sets not included in a deliberate plan, where timeliness is critical."<sup>29</sup>

As a concept plan, CONPLAN 8022 was not operational at the time but was available for implementation if so ordered by the Secretary of Defense. That order came in June 2004, when Defense Secretary Rumsfeld signed the Interim Global Strike Alert Order, which ordered the military to implement CONPLAN 8022 to provide the President with a prompt, Global Strike option. On 30 June 2004, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Chairman General Richard Myers followed up by signing the Global Strike Alert Order (ALERTORD), which ordered STRATCOM to put CONPLAN 8022 into effect with US Navy Tomahawk missiles and Air Force bombers carrying conventional cruise missiles,

Joint Direct Attack Munitions and other bomber weapons. Selected nuclear ballistic missiles were also tasked. Also, per a Presidential Directive issued in the summer of 2004, STRATCOM reportedly was directed to extend Global Strike to counter all HDBTs to include both tactical and strategic adversarial targets.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, on 17 August, STRATCOM published Global Strike Interim Capability Operations Order (OPORD) which changed the status of CONPLAN 8022 from a concept plan to a fully operational contingency plan. And in early September 2004, STRATCOM's command centre issued planning guidelines for CONPLAN 8022 in response to the 30 June ALERTORD and 17 August OPOED. The guidelines also stated that CONPLAN 8022-02 was still in draft form but "undergoing JPEC [Joint Planning and Execution Community] approval process with expected approval date of [deleted]."<sup>31</sup>

To plan and execute the Global Strike mission, STRATCOM set up the Joint Functional Component Command for Space and Global Strike (JFCC SGS). The implementation directive signed by General Cartwright on 18 January 2005 established wide responsibilities for JFCC SGS, ranging from offensive strike planning and execution to space and missile attack warning.<sup>32</sup> JFCC SGS achieved initial operational capability on 18 November 2005 after its integrated planning and operational execution capabilities were tested during Exercise Global Lightning in October 2005.<sup>33</sup>

Before long, however, the mix of Global Strike and Space in one component command proved unworkable. In July 2006, STRATCOM separated the Global Strike and Space functions, changing the name of the component responsible for Global Strike planning to Joint Functional Component Command for Global Strike and Integration (JFCC GSI).<sup>34</sup> JFCC GSI achieved full operational capability in September 2006. Yet even while JFCC GSI was standing up, significant changes took place to the command's planning. In the fall of 2004, according to a declassified STRATCOM document obtained under the *Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA), CONPLAN 8022 was "withdrawn" by General Cartwright.<sup>35</sup> The precise meaning of 'withdrawn' remains unclear, however, because several official sources continued to make references to CONPLAN 8022 after that date:

- In May 2005, following interviews with STRATCOM officials, the *Washington Post* printed an article by William Arkin, making the first public disclosure of the existence of CONPLAN 8022.<sup>36</sup>
- In November 2005, STRATCOM's Exercise Global Lightning 06 practised nuclear combat readiness, facilitated "USSTRATCOM/JFCC/TF Mission Integration," and provided "a bridging exercise between nuclear and non-nuclear forces." The newly established Joint Functional Component Command for Space and Global Strike (later JFCC GSI) participated in the exercise, which simulated execution of both OPPLAN 8044 and CONPLAN 8022.<sup>37</sup>
- In January 2006, STRATCOM said in a FOIA response to the author that "CONPLAN 8022-02 has not been completed. Consequently it has not been approved and remains as a 'draft' plan."<sup>38</sup>
- In March 2006, STRATCOM Public Affairs told the author that CONPLAN "8022 is still in its original version, with no revisions."<sup>39</sup>
- In August 2006, the Air Force Checkmate strategy cell reported that it assisted STRATCOM in "Global Strike CONPLAN [8022] development" during the first half of 2006.<sup>40</sup>

Evidently, CONPLAN 8022 still existed even after STRATCOM said it was 'withdrawn' in the fall of 2004. Perhaps 'withdrawn' meant the plan, once it had been tested, was brought down again from full operational status and returned to the shelf as a concept plan that could be put into effect if necessary. Yet its days as a self-standing strategic strike plan were numbered for several reasons. First, the regional commanders objected to STRATCOM "muscling in on their territories" by creating a war plan that essentially by-passed them.<sup>41</sup> Second, after CONPLAN 8022 was first described in 2005 involving North Korea as a potential target, the South Korean government said it had not been briefed and apparently objected to the unilateral US planning against the North outside the joint US-South Korean military structure.<sup>42</sup> Finally, a self-standing Global Strike plan *outside* OPLAN 8044 and the regional plans does not seem to reflect the central planning requirement for *integration* inherent in the 'New STRATCOM.'

Consequently, CONPLAN 8022 was formally cancelled some time between March 2006 and July 2007, when STRATCOM's Public Affairs office told the

author that CONPLAN 8022 did not exist. When asked whether that meant cancelled or deactivated, the officer checked with ‘the planners’ again and reported back that “there was no such plan any more.” Although the plan had been brought up to full operational status in 2004, the officer said CONPLAN 8022 “was underway but didn’t go anywhere.”<sup>43</sup>

### **Global Strike Today**

After the cancellation of CONPLAN 8022, the Global Strike mission has been integrated into the existing strategic war plan OPLAN 8010 Strategic Deterrence and Global Strike and the various regional war plans to the extent necessary to support plan objectives. In April 2006, a senior STRATCOM official told the author that Global Strike is a “subset of our nuclear and conventional capabilities,” and that “Prompt Global Strike is a conventional subset of Global Strike.” When asked where Global Strike ends and traditional strategic war planning begins, the official explained that “Global Strike is nuclear and conventional,” and that “Prompt Global Strike right now is only nuclear but will be conventional in the future.” Global Strike is becoming an integrated part of the traditional planning but “it won’t give the mass” of traditional strikes. A Pentagon official involved in contingency planning recently confirmed the analysis that Global Strike was being integrated into other plans, saying Global Strike is “migrating.”

Whereas the Global Strike mission as articulated in 2003 and subsequently described by officials was limited, the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) published for JFCC SGS (later JFCC GSI) – the command set up to plan and execute Global Strike – clearly shows that the function of JFCC GSI is much broader. The document gives JFCC GSI responsibility for all of STRATCOM’s traditional nuclear planning work plus Global Strike.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, it is hard to see where OPLAN 8044 planning ends and Global Strike planning begins; both appear to be fully integrated. OPLAN 8044 itself reportedly includes the following mission statement:

Establish and provide full-spectrum global strike, coordinated space and information operations capabilities to meet both deterrent and decisive national security objectives. Provide operational space support, integrated missile defense, global C4ISR and specialized planning expertise to the joint war fighter.<sup>45</sup>

This apparent merger of Global Strike and traditional strategic planning is also reflected in the updated Joint Operating Concept (JOC) for deterrence operations, of which STRATCOM is the lead agent. The earlier version from February 2004 (when CONPLAN 8022 still existed) lists *Nuclear Strike Capabilities* and *Global Strike* as separate direct “means” used to “influence an adversary’s decision calculus.” However, the December 2006 updated and current version merges nuclear and Global Strike into a new category, *Global Strike (nuclear, conventional and non-kinetic)*.<sup>46</sup>

Instead of a self-standing mission of unique capabilities aside from the main strategic nuclear plan, the 2006 JOC list effectively equates Global Strike with the offensive leg of the New Triad, consisting of nuclear, conventional and non-kinetic strike capabilities. “*Within* Global Strike, US nuclear forces contribute uniquely and fundamentally to deterrence,” the 2006 JOC states.<sup>47</sup> In fact, the JOC *only* describes nuclear operations within Global Strike; there is no separate section describing the role of nuclear weapons other than within Global Strike. This merger has important implications for the role of nuclear weapons because it intertwines nuclear and non-nuclear operations and places nuclear weapons at the centre of the most dynamic and offensive part of military planning, a status they otherwise would not have.

From an exotic self-standing mission in the first part of the Bush administration, Global Strike has evolved into an integrated part of the overall nuclear (and conventional) posture. The merger of the Global Strike and strategic war-planning missions to a considerable extent has been made possible by the transformation of the Cold War Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) into a ‘family of plans’ covering a wider range of contingencies and scenarios. During preparations for the SIOP that entered into effect in March 2003, STRATCOM Commander Admiral Ellis wrote to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Myers, that ‘SIOP’ did not properly describe the new plan. “STRATCOM is

changing the nation's nuclear war plan from a single, large, integrated plan to a family of plans applicable in a wider range of scenarios," Ellis explained. The SIOP name, he said, was a Cold War legacy, and Ellis proposed turning the self-standing SIOP into an Operations Plan (OPLAN) alongside other operational war plans: OPLAN 8044.<sup>48</sup>

Admiral Ellis sent his proposal just a week before President Bush signed the Unified Command Plan (Change 2) with the Global Strike mission to STRATCOM. A 'family of plans' fit well with the efforts to create the New Triad, and Myers authorized STRATCOM to change formally the name of the SIOP to reflect the creation of STRATCOM's new family of plans.

General Myers' approval also revealed that SIOP was just one part of a larger plan, called the basic plan, which already carried the name OPLAN 8044. That larger plan has its own life-cycle between upgrades, so Myers was concerned that confusion might arise "between the basic US STRATCOM OPLAN 8044 and the combat employment portion of that OPLAN, currently known as the SIOP."<sup>49</sup> The solution, he decided, was to continue to call the basic plan OPLAN 8044, but add the term "Revision (FY)" to describe the part of the plan previously known as the SIOP. The revision number would correspond to the fiscal year in which the combat employment plan was put into effect. The first plan to carry the new name was OPLAN 8044 Revision 03, which entered into effect on 1 March 2003.

That plan, which included a series of strike options against regional states armed with WMD (see above), was described as a "transitional step toward the New Triad and future war plans."<sup>50</sup> Those options were carried forward into OPLAN 8044 Revision 05, which entered into effect on 1 October 2004, and was described as a "major revamping" of the US strategic war plan. General Myers told Congress that the new plan "provides more flexible options to assure allies, and dissuade, deter, and if necessary, defeat adversaries in a wider range of contingencies."<sup>51</sup> In February 2008, OPLAN 8044 Revision 05 was superseded by OPLAN 8010-08 Global Deterrence and Strike, which in turn was updated to OPLAN 8010-08 Strategic Deterrence and Global Strike in December 2008. The new plan was described as "a new global deterrence plan, a significant step toward integrating deterrence activities across government



agencies and with Allied partners.” The plan “incorporates an inter-agency approach and acknowledges the need for a new understanding of the global context in which we live,” according to STRATCOM.<sup>52</sup>

The overall target categories for OPLAN 8010 are likely similar to the overall target categories used in previous war plans. Due to the broadening of nuclear policy to regional WMD states, however, the target base has spread out considerably to include also chemical and biological facilities in more countries. As a result, the attack options designed to hold at risk the broadening WMD target base appear to have changed considerably over the decades, shifting from a focus on the Soviet Union and to a lesser extent China to an increased focus on China and regional states.<sup>53</sup> CONPLAN 8010 is directed at WMD targets in six countries and also includes conventional strike options. It is the first New Triad strategic war plan. It is this shift from a Soviet/Russian-focused threat-based posture to global contingency-based planning capable of accommodating counter-proliferation missions that has created a paradox in post-Cold War nuclear planning: a *reduction* of the size of strike plans, yet a *broader* “family of plans applicable to a wider range of scenarios” and “more flexible options ... [for use] in a wider range of contingencies.”

## Notes

- \* Editor’s Note: An earlier version of this paper was originally published in *International Journal* (Special Issue on Nuclear Strategy in the Age of Weapons of Mass Destruction), Vol. 63, No. 4 (Autumn 2008), pp. 803-820. We would like to thank the Canadian International Council and the Editors of *International Journal* for their kind permission to reprint the article in this volume of workshop proceedings.
- 1. White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Remarks by the President to Students and Faculty at National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC, 1 May 2001, p. 2.
- 2. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 3. US Department of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, 8 January 2002 (submitted to Congress on 31 December 2001),

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added the mission of coordinating the Pentagon's efforts to combatting weapons of mass destruction. As a result, STRATCOM now has eight primary missions: (1) global deterrence; (2) global support from space-based operations; (3) global intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; (4) Global Strike; (5) global information and network operations; (6) global command and control; (7) global integrated missile defence coordination; and (8) globally combatting WMD.

27. For examples of descriptions of the short timeline of Global Strike attacks, see Kristensen, *Global Strike*.
28. Statement of Admiral James O. Ellis Jr., USN Commander US Strategic Command, before the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, Senate Armed Services Committee, on Strategic Deterrence and Strategic Capabilities, 24 March 2004, p. 4.
29. Opening Statement of Lieutenant-General James Cartwright, Director for Force Structure, Resources, and Assessment Directorate (J-8) the Joint Staff, prepared for the House Armed Services Committee, Projection Forces Subcommittee, regarding conventional long-range, strike capabilities, 3 March 2004, p. 1.
30. US Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration, Nevada Office, Large-Scale, Open-Air Explosive Detonation *Divine Strake* at the Nevada Test Site, DOE/EA01550, pre-approval draft, November 2005, pp. 1-5-1-6.
31. US Strategic Command, Command Center (subject and title classified; concerns development of CONPLAN 8022), 8 September 2004, p. 2, partially declassified and released under FOIA.
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Command milestone reviews, and Command status and/or update briefings for JFCC-SGS (later GSI) [and] CONPLAN 8022." This dubious FOIA determination implies that the Global Strike component has not produced any documents relating to milestones or planning and that STRATCOM has not produce any reviews or status reports about JFCC-GSI or CONPLAN 8022.

36. William M. Arkin, "Not Just a Last Resort," *Washington Post*, 15 May 2005, p. B01.
37. Briefing, Colonel William MacLure, US Air Force, "Checkmate," 11 October 2005, slide 13.
38. Letter, US Strategic Command, to author, response to FOIA request, 9 January 2006.
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49. Memorandum, General Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to STRATCOM Commander, "USSTRATCOM Request to Change the Name of the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) to Operations Plan (OPLAN) 8044," CM-757-03, 8 February 2003, declassified and released under FOIA. Despite the formal name change, some old habits die hard. On 15 June 2006, for example, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs published an update to Instruction 3231.01B that was entitled, "Safeguarding the Single Integrated Operations Plan (SIOP)."
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**Cover photo:** A B-2 Stealth bomber from the 509<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Montana, flies over the St. Louis Arch. US Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Justin D. Pyle.

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# US NUCLEAR STRATEGY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL SECURITY

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A grayscale photograph of a B-2 Spirit stealth bomber in flight, viewed from a low angle. The aircraft is centered horizontally and appears to be flying towards the viewer. In the background, a cityscape is visible, featuring the prominent Gateway Arch of St. Louis. The overall scene is in black and white, with a slightly grainy texture.

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