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# DEMYSTIFYING GLOBAL STRIKE

By LTC Richard Wolfe

## Global Strike

*SMDC/ARSTRAT plans and integrates Army forces for full-spectrum global strike missions. This includes effects-based targeting, analysis, planning, and recommendations for the use of Army forces to strike or assist in striking high payoff/high value targets. All tasks are to support national objectives and/or to assist regional combatant commanders in achieving theater objectives.*

**W**hat is global strike? By now we have all heard the question or asked it ourselves, but the answer to that question depends on whom you ask. Some think global strike is nothing more than a passing fad in defense ideology. Others say it's the assimilation of existing capabilities into an expedited mission. Ask more people and they say it's the future of American defense.

Global strike is a new mission given to U.S. Strategic Command in 2002 with the major changes in the Unified Command Plan. The mission statement for global strike reads: *"Global strike will deliver kinetic and non-kinetic effects on targets with a minimum of planning time and for limited duration."*

But what does global strike mean? In essence, global strike integrates several critical elements of future warfighting. These elements include powerful, deep strikes, across great distances, with conventional rather than nuclear weapons (conventional strategic strike), and using Space to disrupt enemy information systems including computers and satellites (information disruption). Together, these elements form the core of a "global strike" capability. Ideally, global strike can carry out military action designed to preempt an enemy

from attacking the United States or our allies. Global strike could prohibit the enemy from taking actions that are counter to our interests, such as engaging in the support or aid of terrorists or making weapons of mass destruction.

Global strike is an essential part of the doctrine of pre-emption issued by the Bush administration in Sept. 2002 in the National Security Document. In a speech made to West Point in the summer of 2003, President Bush said, "If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we have waited too long."

As U.S. Strategic Command began planning for the global strike mission area, it grappled with the myriad of issues surrounding how to proceed, with pre-emptive strikes being one issue. With initial strike capabilities having been centered on bomber strikes and Tomahawk Land Attack Missile missions, some of the regional combatant commanders, or RCCs, asked why they needed Strategic Command's direction. This led to some confusion on the part of the RCCs. While it is true that the RCCs have formidable arsenals at their disposal and know the troops under their command best, this is not a case of capacity. Global strike is all about speed.

Speedy strikes mean we must have plans and systems thought through ahead of time and appropriately documented and accessible. It means the joint forces must be trained in advance. The need to take swift and decisive action upon the identification of a threat is paramount.

In cases when the threat is identified before the enemy acts against us, diplomatic, informational and economic courses of action are made with increasing speed because we now have information access and situational awareness at a moment's notice. But how fast is fast enough for our military options to act?

In the weeks that followed Sept. 11, 2001, planning timelines frustrated the Department of Defense as they often spanned several months. Global strike is designed to eliminate these delays by preplanning multiple target sets



with joint, fully integrated transregional mission sets, each designed to deliver precise and immediate effects on target. Global strike allows the president or the secretary of defense to rapidly review the range of global strike missions and select the one or ones, which, in light of the current diplomat, economic and international situation provide the most appropriate response. These global strike options are maintained at U.S. Strategic Command and developed in conjunction with the service components. The plans are coordinated through each service component to the RCCs and may be requested by the RCC in whole or in part.

So, what is the Army's role in global strike? As U.S. Strategic Command rolled out its first impressions of global strike, SMDC/ARSTRAT began to determine its ability to provide forces in support of the global strike mission as its Army Service Component Command. Additionally, it appeared that the non-kinetic effects of Space and information operations missions with support of C4 and ISR missions were all that the Army could contribute, given a timeline of hours rather than days. It was considered that an Army postured for long duration missions, large-scale wars and self-sustaining staying power could not react quickly enough. But given the swift reactions and rapid deployment of many combat units during the first days of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the world saw that the Army's changing forces do play a role. In discussions with SMDC/ARSTRAT leadership and U.S. Strategic Command, it became evident that the Army could lend a level of dexterity to global strike allowing for capture, exploitation or even the provision for blocking or cordon force.

In order to present a definitive recommendation to senior Army leadership, the global strike team at SMDC/ARSTRAT met with planners from every Army major command. These meetings lead to a consolidated working group of the Army Service Command, U.S. Strategic Command and SMDC/ARSTRAT action officers. Upon its completion, the group presented its recommendations

to BG Robert Lennox, Deputy Commanding General for Operations, SMDC/ARSTRAT. The workgroup concluded that Army Tactical Missile Systems, or ATACM, attack aviation, light infantry (airborne or air assault), unmanned aerial vehicles, and some specialty units (engineer or chemical) have applicability to this global strike mission. As these recommendations are passed through the chain of command, we hope to continue to clarify the Army's contributions in this growing mission area. Moreover, as the Army transforms its organizational structure under the Units of Employment and Units of Action (UE/UA) concept, the possibilities for specially constructed UAs, specifically adapted for global strike missions may become a serious consideration.

Despite the obvious limitations and employment restraints of each of these Army capabilities, their inclusion in the planning process is critical. Even if Army assets are only used for a fraction of total U.S. Strategic Command targets, their inclusion in the planning process forces the Army to give a critical look at the effectiveness of its transformation, the direction of its research and design, the evolution of its doctrine and its force structure. If we are truly to embrace a culture of innovation, then a focus on this mission area is a key step in actualizing that culture. Including Army conventional forces in global strike planning and mission area development at its infancy allows us to assimilate its rapid joint integrated transregional focus into all that we do. This focus helps us more accurately and completely understand and realize the Chief of Staff's vision of a relevant and ready Army, both today and in the future.

LTC Richard B. Wolfe is Chief of the Global Strike Branch, G-3 Plans and Exercise, SMDC/ARSTRAT. Former assignments include Training and Information Management, AOC, ODO, G-3, HQDA, Army Pentagon; Chief of Plans and Operations DC National Guard; Commander, Pennsylvania Army National Guard Officer Candidate School. LTC Wolfe is a graduate of the Organizational Leadership Program, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government Army Command and General Staff Officers Course.