

U.S. Nuclear First Strike Doctrine Is Operational

by Jeffrey Steinberg

The Bush Administration has quietly put into place contingency plans for the use of nuclear weapons in pre-emptive attacks on at least two countries—Iran and North Korea. Confirmation of the new “global strike” plan appeared in the *Washington Post* on Sunday, May 15, in a column by William Arkin, a former Army Intelligence analyst. *EIR* has interviewed several senior U.S. intelligence officials, who have confirmed the essential features of Arkin’s report. They link the accelerated drive to prepare for offensive nuclear strikes against Iran and North Korea to the failure of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, and the dismal results of the use of “shock and awe” massive conventional bombings against Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Afghanistan war of 2003 provided the U.S. Air Force with the opportunity to test, under live combat conditions, the conventional “bunker buster” mega-bombs, which were supposed to penetrate and take out deep-underground hardened targets. But one senior U.S. intelligence source told *EIR* that, when U.S. troops arrived to do damage assessments, they found that the Taliban and Al Qaeda mountain bunkers were still largely intact, after being hit with the bunker busters.

The sources further emphasized that “military strategists see our vulnerabilities, especially after Iraq.” U.S. military doctrine, one source said, had previously presumed a capability to engage in two sustained conflicts in two different regions of the world. “Such engagements are no longer possible, as the Iraq occupation shows. So there is now a shift to a doctrine of quick wars. The alternative to this change was to have the U.S. status as the last global superpower exposed as a fraud.” The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, noted: “We have 150,000 U.S. troops and thousands of spies—the biggest spy contingent globally—and we can’t identify the Iraqi insurgents. . . . There was a presumption that you could invade and occupy without engaging in any kind of nation-building. And that is an oxymoron.”

The source cautioned that the Bush Administration’s new global strike plans are premised on the “fantasy” that you can develop a limited nuclear weapons capability that will not radioactively contaminate the area and kill large numbers of people. His final indictment of the new Bush Administration pre-emptive nuclear war doctrine was that, ultimately, when you talk about targetting North Korea, which is the number one target for a possible Bush Administration pre-emptive nuclear strike, you are really talking about war with China.

CONPLAN 8022

The Arkin story in the May 15 *Washington Post*, which has been picked up by news outlets around the world, offered a chronology of the recent steps taken by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, on the road to pre-emptive nuclear war. This updated a *EIR* timeline of the Bush-Cheney Administration’s drive to pre-emptive nuclear war, which was published on March 7, 2003, and is reprinted below. That original story tagged John Bolton as a pivotal player in the drive to end a quarter-century American policy of no first nuclear strike against any non-nuclear power. It traced the origins of the pre-emptive nuclear war policy to the early 1990s and then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, who launched a plan to include “mini-nukes” in the conventional arsenal.

Arkin’s article continues the chronology from mid-2004: “Early last summer,” Arkin wrote, “Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld approved a top secret ‘Interim Global Strike Alert Order’ directing the military to assume and maintain readiness to attack hostile countries that are developing weapons of mass destruction, specifically Iran and North Korea. . . . In the secret world of military planning, global strike has become the term of art to describe a specific pre-emptive attack. When military officials refer to global strike, they stress its conventional elements. Surprisingly, however, global strike also includes a nuclear option, which runs



This gang of scoundrels has been gunning to end a quarter-century of U.S. strategic doctrine banning first use of nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear power. Now, contingency plans for just such a nuclear attack have been quietly put in place. Left to right: George Shultz, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and John Bolton.

counter to traditional U.S. notions about the defensive role of nuclear weapons.”

Arkin traced the Global Strike schema to a January 2003 classified Presidential Directive, in which President Bush defined a “full-spectrum” global strike as “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.” Along the way, the Strategic Command (Stratcom), headquartered at Offert Air Force Base in Omaha, Nebraska, which formerly had been exclusively responsible for America’s nuclear weapons triad, was merged with the Space Command, and given responsibility for global operations involving both nuclear and conventional weapons.

Already, the September 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States, for the first time, had codified the doctrine of pre-emptive war, stating that the U.S. “must be prepared 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.” Stratcom then established an interim global strike division, to devise plans by the end of 2002.

Arkin reported that “CONPLAN 8022-22 was completed in November 2003, putting in place for the first time a pre-emptive and offensive strike capability, against Iran and North Korea. In January 2004, [Admiral James O.] Ellis certified Stratcom’s readiness for global strike to the Defense Secretary and the President.”

Arkin warned that “This blurring of the nuclear/conventional line, wittingly or unwittingly, could heighten the risk that the nuclear option will be used.” He then detailed ele-

ments of CONPLAN 8022, which could involve the use of nuclear bunker busters, to take out hardened command structures and WMD depots in Iran or North Korea. CONPLAN 8022 could be activated if the U.S. determined there was an imminent threat of a nuclear attack, or “for a more generic attack on an adversary’s WMD infrastructure.”

“The global strike plan,” Arkin wrote, “holds the nuclear option in reserve if intelligence suggests an ‘imminent’ launch of an enemy nuclear strike on the United States or if there is a need to destroy hard-to-reach targets.” CONPLAN 8022 does not envision “boots on the ground,” he said, but combines precision weapons attacks with commando-style short-term operations, thus vastly reducing the time required to stage and launch an attack.

Nuclear Bunker Busters Already Deployed?

One of the most controversial issues arising from the new Bush-Cheney Global Strike plan effort surrounds the potential use of nuclear bunker busters. The Bush Administration has attempted, in every defense budget, to add funding for research and development of a new generation of mini-nuclear weapons. This year, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld has asked for more than \$8 million to continue research on Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP) weapons.

On April 28, Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D-Calif.) issued a press release, citing a just-released government-mandated study on RNEPs by the National Research Council. The study debunked the fundamental premise of nuclear bunker busters: that they will penetrate so deep below the Earth’s surface before detonating that there will be minimal radioactive fallout. Tauscher stated, “In this report, the National Research

Council affirmed critical warnings about the deadly effects of nuclear fallout—both in risks posed to the local population and to troops—possibly American or allied forces . . . In yesterday’s study, they conclude: ‘Current experience and empirical predictions indicate that earth-penetrator weapons *cannot* penetrate to depths required for *total containment* of the effects of a nuclear explosion,’ a sentiment voiced earlier this year by National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) head Linton Brooks.’

Tauscher continued, “The report finds that the majority of deeply buried targets lie only 250 meters below the surface. These findings, coupled with the ‘Sedan’ tests conducted decades ago at the Nevada Test Site, clearly demonstrate that exploding nuclear ‘bunker busters’ would pose an incredible risk to civilians on the ground and in neighboring areas [with] ‘casualties ranging from *thousands to more than a million.*’ ”

Beyond the issue of the persistent Bush-Cheney Administration push for more money for R&D on a new generation of bunker busters, it appears that bunker busters are already an integral part of the existing U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal. According to Greg Mello, the head of the Los Alamos Study Group, which closely monitors the U.S. nuclear weapons program, the Pentagon already has a deployable stockpile of B-61 “mod 11” bunker busters. The 1,200-pound bombs, which can be carried on B-2A Stealth bombers and even F-16 fighter jets, had been developed as a “modification” of existing bunker busters, replacing the older B-53 8,900-pound, 9-megaton “City Busters.” By claiming that there were no new physical principles introduced with the B-61 “mod 11,” the Pentagon sidestepped the Spratt-Furce attachment to the FY 1994 Defense Appropriation Bill, which banned any R&D on low-yield nuclear weapons (under 5 kilotons). The B-61 “mod 11” can carry a nuclear bomb with a payload as small as 300 tons.

Rumsfeld Lets It All Hang Out

So as to remove any ambiguity from the Bush-Cheney nuclear madness, on March 15, 2005, the Pentagon placed on its public website a draft version of Joint Publication 3-12, “Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations” (see *Documentation* on next page). This 69-page report made clear that the Bush Administration has fully integrated nuclear weapons into the conventional war-fighting. The Executive Summary stated: “For many contingencies, existing and emerging conventional capabilities will meet anticipated requirements; however, some contingencies will remain where the most appropriate response may include the use of U.S. nuclear weapons. *Integrating conventional and nuclear attacks* will ensure the most efficient use of force and provide U.S. leaders with a broader range of strike options to address immediate contingencies. Integration of conventional and nuclear forces is therefore crucial to the success of any comprehensive strategy.”

Elsewhere in the Executive Summary, it was declared, “*The U.S. does not make positive statements defining the circumstances under which it would use nuclear weapons.* Main-

taining U.S. ambiguity about when it would use nuclear weapons helps create doubt in the minds of potential adversaries, deterring them from taking hostile action.”

For 25 years, up to the inauguration of George W. Bush, U.S. policy was that there would be no American first-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear armed states. George Shultz, Dick Cheney, John Bolton and company have fulfilled their impulse to hold the world hostage to unilateral nuclear weapons use in the hands of a President who shows increasing signs of madness.

From Deterrence to Nuclear Warfighting

by Carl Osgood

Since 2001, the Bush Administration has been promulgating a new nuclear doctrine that replaces deterrence with war fighting. The January 2002 Nuclear Posture Review broke down the wall that had previously existed between the use of nuclear forces and the use of conventional forces. It redefined nuclear weapons as just another tool in the tool kit of strategic operations by which adversaries and potential adversaries could be coerced into a position favorable to the United States.

No longer does the United States view nuclear weapons as primarily a deterrence force, the use of which would be seen as a failure. Under the Bush Administration, nuclear weapons are fully integrated, doctrinally and operationally, into the full range of military operations. The U.S. Strategic Command is being reorganized to reflect this outlook, and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has even placed a Marine, Gen. James Cartright, as its head. Historically, the Marines have not had much to do with the strategic level of war, their primary competence being in expeditionary warfare. Cartright’s appointment, however, is in line with the new outlook brought in by Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney.

Columnist William Arkin commented on this transformation at a Washington, D.C. conference of the Nuclear Policy Research Institute in January of 2004. He noted that when the Strategic Command (Stratcom) was first created in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, it was seen as the custodian of nuclear forces that would be segregated from conventional military forces. However, with the merging of Stratcom and the U.S. Space Command, and the codification of the Nuclear Posture Review and the 2003 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, Stratcom has been transformed into what Arkin described as a “super global strike command,” with responsibilities that include space operations; missile defense; nodal analysis on a global scale, including effects-based operations, cyber warfare, and strate-