

Preemptive Nuclear War in a State of Readiness: U.S. Command Declares Global Strike Capability

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WASHINGTON — The U.S. Strategic Command announced yesterday it had achieved an operational capability for rapidly striking targets around the globe using nuclear or conventional weapons, after last month testing its capacity for nuclear war against a fictional country believed to represent North Korea (see [GSN](#), Oct. 21).

In a press release yesterday, STRATCOM said a new Joint Functional Component Command for Space and Global Strike on Nov. 18 “met requirements necessary to declare an initial operational capability.”

The requirements were met, it said, “following a rigorous test of integrated planning and operational execution capabilities during Exercise Global Lightning.”

The annual Global Lightning exercise last month tested U.S. strategic warfare capabilities, including the so-called CONPLAN 8022 mission for a global strike, according to publicly available military documents.

CONPLAN 8022 is “a new strike plan that includes [a] pre-emptive nuclear strike against weapons of mass destruction facilities anywhere in the world,” said Hans Kristensen, a consultant for the Natural Resources Defense Council. Kristensen first published the STRATCOM press release on his Web site, [nukestrat.com](#).

Military analyst William Arkin, in a [column](#) on the *Washington Post* Web site in October, wrote that the classified exercise involved the response to a radiological “dirty bomb” attack on Alabama by the fictional country Purple or allied terrorists. “In the exercise, Purple is a Northeast Asian nation thinly veiled as North Korea,” according to Arkin.

Maj. Jeff Jones, STRATCOM spokesman, said today that the exercise incorporated various scenarios and added, “Everything is fictional that we put in the exercise.”

Global Lightning employed command and control personnel, according to the STRATCOM release.

Global strike attacks could be launched from U.S. long-range bombers, nuclear submarines or land-based ballistic missiles, according to the STRATCOM Web site.

The new command was created Aug. 9 in an attempt to integrate broad elements of U.S. military power into global strike plans and operations.

That, according to an Arkin [commentary](#) in the *Washington Post* in May, could include anything from electronic jamming to penetrating computer networks, to commando operations, to the use of a nuclear earth penetrator. CONPLAN 8022, he wrote, is intended to address two scenarios using such capabilities: preventing a suspected imminent nuclear attack from a small state, and attacking an adversary's suspected WMD infrastructure.

STRATCOM Commander Gen. James Cartwright said at an opening ceremony that the new command would help the country convey a "new kind of deterrence."

According to the STRATCOM release, "The command's performance during Global Lightning demonstrated preparedness to execute its mission of providing integrated space and global strike capabilities to deter and dissuade aggressors and when directed, defeat adversaries through decisive joint global effects in support of STRATCOM missions."

According to Arkin's article in May, CONPLAN 8022 was completed in 2003, "putting in place for the first time a pre-emptive and offensive strike capability against Iran and North Korea."

STRATCOM's readiness for global strike was certified to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and President George W. Bush in January 2004, Arkin reported.

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