

AN APPEAL TO UNA-USA CHAPTERS

For over half a century, U.S. Strategic Command near Omaha, Nebraska was responsible for one mission and one mission only: command and control of America's nuclear deterrent. The 'doomsday machine' of the U.S.'s military arsenal, Strategic Command symbolized our fears of the 'unthinkable' and the threat of nuclear holocaust. For decades during the tense years of the Cold War, the only thing standing in the way of our collective annihilation was that these weapons were in fact never meant to be used. Under the high-stakes doctrine of "Mutual Assured Destruction," StratCom's nuclear arsenal was understood to be strictly *defensive* in intent—to be unleashed only as a last resort when our doom as a planet was already sealed. Looking back, it was just lucky that neither the Soviet Union nor the U.S., it turns out, had really wanted a nuclear war.

Following the tragic terrorist attacks of 9/11, however, StratCom began to undergo a drastic makeover in its role and mission. Between 2002 and 2005, *seven* more missions were added to its charge, for a total of eight. Besides its historic responsibility for nuclear deterrence, StratCom also assumed command for space, cyberspace, intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance, information operations, global strike, missile defense and combating weapons of mass destruction.

Tasked with waging the White House's "War on Terror," StratCom today stands ready to attack any place on earth in one hour—with either conventional or *nuclear* weapons—on the mere suspicion of a threat to America's national security. Now *offensive* rather than defensive in purpose, Strategic Command has gone from 'never supposed to be used' to 'being used for everything.' The current StratCom Commander, General Kevin Chilton, has even stated that he believes the name should be changed from "Strategic Command" to "Global Command" to more accurately reflect its global nature and scope.

For advocates of the United Nations and international rule of law, this 'New StratCom' poses three specific concerns.

First, StratCom's transformation is a direct outgrowth of the Bush/Cheney Administration's "Doctrine of Preemption." On its face, this policy is an open violation of the UN Charter forbidding offensive attacks on other nation states (except under the most extraordinary circumstances). The most notorious application of this doctrine is, of course, the invasion of Iraq, which former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan flatly labeled "illegal."

StratCom, however, is now the White House's weapon of choice to carry out these unilateral attacks. As a tool of the executive branch, it has become a scofflaw even in its own country, both by usurping Congress' authority to declare war and by conducting constitutionally questionable spying operations on unsuspecting American citizens.

Second, under the terms of the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty and the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, the world's nuclear states are simultaneously obliged to disarm

their nuclear stockpiles and prohibited from developing any new generations of weapons. Since 9/11, however, StratCom has actively lobbied for the research, development and production of the ‘bunker buster’ tactical mini-nuke for use in conventional military conflicts, and for the new “Reliable Replacement Warhead” to upgrade its strategic nuclear readiness.

Coupled with the new *offensive* authority granted to it in the 2002 “Nuclear Posture Review,” StratCom is now routinely flouting international law governing nuclear armaments at the very moment the U.S. government is hounding Iran over its civilian nuclear program.

Third and finally, the enhanced military menace that StratCom now constitutes with its offensive mission array has largely been made possible by its dominance of outer space—because whoever controls space controls the earth.

In October 2002, when the U.S. Space Command was formally placed under StratCom’s wing, nobody imagined that in less than six months the “Shock and Awe” bombing campaign on Iraq would be launched and executed from StratCom’s headquarters in suburban Omaha. Seventy percent of the weapons targeted on Iraq in that attack were directed from space by StratCom assets. “Shock and Awe” not only demonstrated how sweeping StratCom’s reach now is; it showed how vital space has become to the execution of all of the command’s various missions.

Under the 2006 revised “National Space Policy,” the United States now asserts a right to deny access to space to anyone “hostile to U.S. interests.” In addition to reserving the use of outer space to itself and its approved allies, the revised policy rejects future arms-control agreements for fear they will limit U.S. flexibility in space. As former Space Command General Joseph Ashy brazenly put it, “Absolutely, we’re going to fight *from* space and we’re going to fight *into* space.” That belligerent attitude accounts for why the U.S. is now the only country in the entire world to annually vote against the **PAROS** (**P**revention of an **A**rms **R**ace in **O**uter **S**pace) resolution in the UN General Assembly. The 2008 vote, for instance, was 177 for, 1 against.

With its new offensive (and legally suspect) role and mission, U.S. Strategic Command today constitutes a more serious threat to international security than at any time in its history. It is, as the theme of a recent international conference in Omaha aptly expressed it, “the most dangerous place on the face of the earth.” The dramatic changes in StratCom’s reach and purpose have occurred so swiftly, however, that hardly anyone is even aware of what’s happened—let alone comprehends the political and military implications for the world.

As an organization committed to international cooperation, negotiation and peace, the United Nations Association is uniquely positioned to help spread the word about StratCom’s changed role. With its worldwide network, UNA can play a leading part in educating people around the globe about the menace StratCom poses to the goals of the United Nations. Living as we do in the shadow of StratCom, we—the members of the Nebraska Division of UNA-USA—feel a special responsibility to alert our sister chapters around the world of this threat.

We can’t do it alone, though. We need your help to make StratCom an educational priority for the entire UNA. Knowledge is power. But to muster the power needed to stop StratCom, the world must first understand the danger it poses.

Dear WFUNA Colleagues,

We live an hour from one of the most dangerous places on the face of the earth.

Offutt Air Force Base, outside Omaha, Nebraska, has for decades been the legendary command center for the US's nuclear deterrent—for America's stockpiled Weapons of Mass Destruction.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, however, US Strategic Command (or 'StratCom') underwent a transformation that, incredible as it sounds, has made it even more dangerous. Now *offensive* rather than defensive in intent, StratCom today is charged with waging the U.S. government's preemptive 'War on Terror' and endeavoring to militarily dominate outer space.

All of these missions—nuclear weapons, preemptive war and space superiority—contravene the peacemaking goals of the United Nations and threaten global security. And yet, this transformation of StratCom's role and mission has happened so fast hardly anyone outside Nebraska even knows of it.

The Nebraska Division of the UNA-USA is submitting the enclosed resolution for consideration at the 2009 UNA-USA National Convention in New York City June 13-15 specifically to start alerting the world community about enhanced threat StratCom now constitutes. The resolution is being co-sponsored by the Montana, Monterey Bay CA, Albuquerque NM, Pike's Peak CO, Northern Colorado and Seattle WA Chapters.

We hope you will share this information with the chapters and affiliates in your country. We would, of course, be pleased to answer any questions or concerns you might have.

Best Wishes,

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P.S. *Even though the Obama Administration will be more supportive of the United Nations, the roots of U.S. militarism run deep. StratCom is certain to retain its offensive mission regardless of who is president. UNA Chapters can help deter this threat by alerting their members of the danger StratCom poses to the UN's peacemaking goals.*