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## Revealed: US plan to 'own' space

As part of a plan to ensure its total military supremacy, the US is preparing to complete the domination of space -- by any means necessary. **Neil Mackay** explains the terrifying new face of global warfare

IT SOUNDS like the stuff of the darkest sci-fi fantasies, but it's not. The Air Force Space Command Strategic Master Plan is a clear statement of the US's intention to dominate the world by turning space into the crucial battlefield of the 21st century.

The document details how the US Air Force Space Command is developing exotic new weapons, nuclear warheads and spacecraft to allow the US to hit any target on earth within seconds. It also unashamedly states that the US will not allow any other power to get a foothold in space.

The rush to militarise space will also see domestic laws and foreign agreements torn up. As the document warns: 'To fully develop and exploit [space] ... some US policies and international treaties may need to be reviewed and modified'.

The Strategic Master Plan (SMP) changes the nature of war. No longer will battles be fought by ships, aircraft and ground forces. Instead the US will use its technology to dominate any theatre of war from space.

The document also opens the door for the US to become the only global policeman. Control of space will give it uniquely instantaneous reach, capable of 'worldwide military operations.'

The first page of the document clearly spells out America's agenda. General Lance W Lord, of Air Force Space Command, writes in his foreword: 'As guardians of the High Frontier, Air Force Space Command has the vision and the people to ensure the United States achieves space superiority today and in the future.'

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The document also lays the groundwork for the development of '21st century space warriors' -- a new military cadre tasked solely to fight 'from and in' space. The SMP says this Space Corps 'is just as crucial to the success of our vision as employing new technologies'.

Air Force Space Command operates from a base in Colorado and its mission is to 'defend America through space and intercontinental ballistic missile operations'. Its ultimate goal is to 'project global reach and global power'. Although little is known about Space Command in Europe, it is central to the US military machine and staffed by some 40,000 military and civilians.

General Lord says the strategy of the SMP 'will enable us to transform space power to provide our nation with diverse options to globally apply force in, from, and through space with modern intercontinental ballistic missiles ... and new conventional global strike capabilities'.

In gung-ho language, the foreword reads: 'Precision weapons guided to their targets by space-based navigation -- instant global communications for commanders and their forces -- enemy weapons of mass destruction held at risk by a ready force of intercontinental ballistic missiles -- adversary missiles detected within seconds of launch. This is not a vision of the future. This is space today!'

Lord adds: 'Our space team is building capabilities that provide the President with a range of space power options to discourage aggression or any form of coercion against the United States.'

The (SMP) says: 'Effective use of space-based resources provides a continual and global presence over key areas of the world ... military forces have always viewed the 'high ground' position as one of dominance. With rare exception, whoever owned the high ground owned the fight. Space is the ultimate high ground of US military operations.'

'Today, control of this high ground means superiority ... and significant force enhancement. Tomorrow, ownership may mean instant engagement anywhere in the world.'

The primary goal of the SMP is to give the US military 'the capability to deliver attacks from space'. The use of 'space power' would also let the US deploy military might instantaneously across the face of the earth and completely 'bypass adversary defences'.

In order to 'fully exploit and control space', the United States Air Force Space Command says it has to 'negate' the ability of foreign powers to develop their own space capabilities. The plan also demands that Space Command 'focus on missions carried out by weapons systems operating from or through space for holding terrestrial targets at risk'.

The document proclaims US aspirations to 'global vigilance, reach and power', and Space Command says its vision 'looks 25 years into the future and is summed up as follows: space warfighting forces providing continuous deterrence and prompt global engagement for America ... through the control and exploitation of space'.

The aim, the SMP says, is to:

- 'Extend the reach, precision and intensity of US military power and operations.'
- 'Ensure the ability to apply space forces when and where we need them and that our adversary understands the advantage we possess.'

- 'Use our space capabilities at our discretion while at the same time denying our adversaries access to space assets at their disposal.'

One of Space Command's key functions is the operation of America's arsenal of intercontinental ballistic missiles. The SMP details how the US wants to be able to fire either nuclear or conventional missiles from space, out of range of enemy weapons. 'Such a capability will provide warfighting commanders the ability to rapidly deny, delay, deceive, disrupt, destroy, exploit and neutralise targets in hours/minutes rather than weeks/days,' it adds.

The SMP also shows how the US fears advances in space technology among other nations -- including its European allies. 'Space capabilities are proliferating internationally,' it says, 'a trend that can reduce the advantages we currently enjoy.' It points out that Space Command has no control over the European Galileo satellite system .

A list of strategies and objectives detail the goals of Space Command in the coming years. These include:

- creating an instantaneous global strike force.
- Total monitoring of the Earth by 'real-time global situation awareness.'
- a nuclear arsenal in space.
- the development of exotic new weapons.
- the maintenance of US military dominance. The doctrine declares: 'when challenged, pursue superiority in space through robust ... defensive and offensive capabilities.'
- a fully integrated 'land, sea, air and space war-fighting system.'
- integrating civil and commercial space operations with military ones.

One of the exotic weapons in development is known as the Ground Moving Target Indicator (GMTI). This would be a tracking device, based in space, which could pinpoint and follow the smallest of targets on earth . GMTI, the document says, will improve the ability to 'detect, locate, identify and track a wide range of strategic and tactical targets we currently have minimal ability to detect, such as nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and activities, hidden targets and moving air targets'.

The worldwide scope of Space Command's project is shown by the names of some of the units under its control: Global Strike, Air and Space Expeditionary, Global Response Task Forces and Global Mobility Task Force. Space Command is also setting up a wing of the intelligence services devoted to the militarisation of space. Space Command says it is 'aggressively modernising our existing nuclear forces' .

Another goal is the ability to use a 'conventional non-nuclear prompt global strike from and through space'. One of the new weapons tipped to bring about this transformation is the CAV, or Common Aero Vehicle. This military spaceplane would be stocked with so-called smart bombs and could strike targets from space.

Another exotic development will be 'a virtual, global, synthetic battlespace in which space forces will train [and] rehearse missions'. The US space corps would fight global cyber-battles in a virtual world as big as the earth and its atmosphere. This would complement current Space Command facilities such as the Space Warfare Centre, the Space Battle Lab and the Fusion Centre.

The conclusion of the SMP report leaves no doubt of how important these plans are to the US military and government: 'Expanding the role of space in future conflicts ... produces a fully integrated air and space force that is persuasive in peace, decisive in war and pre-eminent in any form of conflict.'

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