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StratCom already planning pre-emptive strike on Iran

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In an unprecedented collaboration, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Law and U.S. Strategic Command are hosting a "Space and Telecom Law Conference" in Lincoln on March 2. StratCom Commander and Marine Gen. James "Hoss" Cartwright will deliver the opening speech at this event, slated to address the military, commercial and tourism dimensions of "Security and Risk Management in a New Space Era."

But here's what he probably won't be telling this law school audience. That StratCom - at the behest of the Bush/Cheney Administration - has already devised plans for a pre-emptive (and, under international law, illegal) attack on Iran. As the March 2007 issue of Vanity Fair reports,

"Another serious development is the growing role of the U.S. Strategic Command (StratCom), which oversees nuclear weapons, missile defense and protection against weapons of mass destruction. Bush has directed StratCom to draw up plans for a massive strike against Iran... 'Shifting to StratCom indicates that they are talking about a really punishing air-force and naval air attack [on Iran],' says [retired Col. W. Patrick Lang, who served as an officer for the Middle East, South Asia, and terrorism at the Defense Intelligence Agency]." Imagine for a moment how this must look to the Muslim world ...

The command center for the largest nuclear arsenal in the world has been charged with planning, launching and coordinating an unprovoked assault on a non-nuclear Muslim nation, in order to keep that country from even being able to develop nuclear energy for civilian purposes. StratCom's attack plan even includes the use of tactical nuclear weapons to take out the reinforced bunkers housing Iran's nuclear research facilities.

The Islamic broadcast network, Al Jazeera, could have a field day with this sort of 'double standard':

The U.S. gets to have all the nuclear armaments it wants (including a proposed new generation of nuclear weapons-the 'bunker-buster' mini-nuke and the Reliable Replacement Warhead), to use however it sees fit. And under the "Bush Doctrine" of pre-emption, the U.S. even has the prerogative to offensively use nuclear weapons to prevent 'wannabe' states from 'going nuclear.' But Iran is to be prohibited from developing nuclear power, for fear it might someday make a bomb.

This kind of hypocrisy is guaranteed to feed anti-American feeling in the Mideast, and lend credence to Russian President Putin's charge that it is in fact we who are the nuclear threat to the world.

Timely as the topic is, though, I'm guessing Commander Cartwright isn't going to say much at this 'law' conference about StratCom's plan to attack Iran.

Nor do I imagine that he'll dwell on the military- and space-based assistance StratCom provided in the "Shock and Awe" bombing campaign on Iraq (an assault which former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan described as a flat-out violation of international law). The efforts of StratCom's Space Command in that aerial blitzkrieg inspired then-Air Force Secretary James Roche to describe the 2003 attack as "the first true space war."

I further doubt that the commander will care to get into the legalities of StratCom's new mission of "Full Spectrum Global Strike" - a hi-tech version of 'shoot first, ask questions later,' whereby the Omaha command center is authorized to attack a target anywhere on earth in two hours, with conventional or nuclear weapons, if a threat to America's national security is suspected.

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And I'm guessing most Nebraskans are unaware that the now-infamous "warrantless wiretap" program conducted by the National Security Agency was a StratCom-sponsored project. But you'll be relieved to know that the man who launched this illegal spying operation, Gen. Michael Hayden, is no longer a "component commander" at StratCom. He's the new director of the CIA.

I haven't even touched on the civil liberties issues regarding the use of StratCom's satellite network to spy on people from space, the legality of its efforts to 'militarize' and 'weaponize' space, or its stated goal of U.S. space dominance to the exclusion of all others - all subjects, one would assume, worthy of consideration at a conference claiming to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the "Outer Space Treaty"

StratCom is more than just a scofflaw - it's becoming a law unto itself. And yet, far as I can determine, none of these topics are on the March 2 conference program.

I've already paid my $100 registration fee for the conference, and the morning of March 2, I'll be on the 'inside' to hear for myself what Commander Cartwright has to say about the command's current activities. But I would hope there will be a bunch of us on the 'outside' protesting StratCom's role in the impending attack on Iran. And while they're at it, sending a message to the UNL College of Law that rubbing shoulders with a command center that habitually flouts rule of law hardly falls within the college's academic mission.

Source: JournalStar.com

Rinne is state coordinator of Nebraskans for Peace, the oldest statewide peace and justice organization in the country.

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