

Is There a Future for Long-Range Strike?

A B-2 Spirit stealth bomber is shown in flight, viewed from a low angle. The aircraft is dark grey and has a highly angular, stealthy design. It is flying over a landscape with a layer of white clouds below it. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The aircraft's wings are long and narrow, tapering to points. A small white insignia is visible on the side of the fuselage, and a larger one is on the tail section.

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The Nature of Long-Range Strike

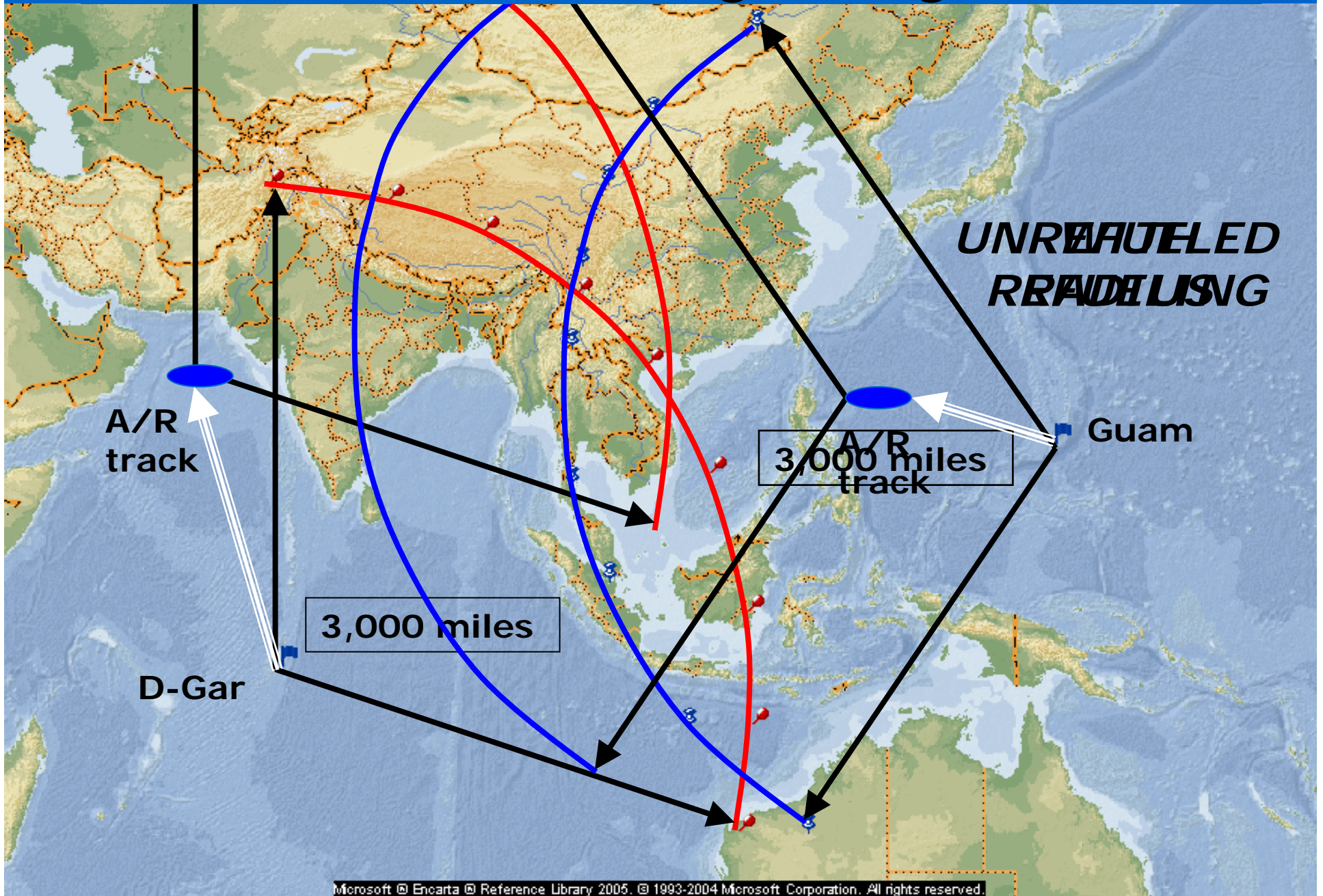


“Air strategy begins with airplane **ranges**. Airplane ranges determine the location of **bases**. The proximity of the target to the bases under one’s control fixes the **weight** and **rhythm** of the attack.”

General Carl “Tooeey” Spaatz

If ranges and base locations are insufficient to carry out attacks of sufficient “weight and rhythm,” we close off strategic options for the President, and diminish US national security

The Case for Long-Range Strike



Why Range Matters

- Proliferation of long strike systems
 - PRC, Iran are bellwethers – mobile targets
 - IDF's Lebanon campaign provides clues
- Naval and land bases increasingly at risk
- "Burger King" bases shrinking in number
- Denied-area operations critical
- Nuclear proliferated world very likely

**Eventually, you must operate *within* the threat ring,
but range still matters!**

Range is Good

- Deterrence and shaping
 - Adversaries know about range rings
 - *Denies sanctuaries*
- Presents adversary planners with dilemma
 - Bases at range harder to hit, easier to defend
 - Potential approach azimuths multiply
- Translates into **persistence**
- Relieves pressure, reliance on aerial refueling – our air campaign COG

3,000 mile unrefueled combat radius is a minimum

Back to the Future

- 1950s provides lessons
 - Rise of Soviet anti-access capability
 - Wohlstetter (RAND) basing report
- SAC & TAC: different problems, similar solutions
 - TAC: dispersal, hardening, alert aircraft
 - SAC: operate outside threat ring ... *wrong!*
- Evolving context -- important differences

SAC & TAC changed their posture & CONOPS!

The Case for Long-Range Strike

- Strategic logic not crystal clear
 - Denial of PRC Rise + LRS/nuclear proliferation
 - Our adversaries get it!
- Fiscal reality – topline likely to fall
- Tradeoffs more painful, LRS survival requires
 - Strong internal constituency
 - Series of Chiefs dedicated to this mission
- Domestic politics
 - The American people get it
 - Congress gets it . . .
 - OSD gets it . . .
 - Does the Navy get it?

Obstacles to Long-Range Strike

- The Air Force?
 - Success breeds incrementalism
 - So many LRS studies, so little action
 - “Outsourced” LRS to STRATCOM
 - Big, slipping fighter and satellite programs
 - Glaring needs: tankers, stealthy ISR, basing, lift
 - Demise of bomber mafia—searching for LeMay
 - Self-doubt—failure to define alternative views
- Others ... and there will always be others

Not the only obstacles . . .

just the ones the USAF can control

A Steady LRS Flight Path

- The new bomber – range, stealth, unmanned
 - 3,000 mile combat radius minimum (Navy-1500)
 - Stealthy, subsonic platform (cost, time)
 - Unmanned (endurance, stealth advantages)
- Update the B-2 fleet
- Pursue penetrating weapons for B-52/B-1
- Stealthy ISR, recapitalized aerial refueling
- 21st century approach to airbase access
 - Strategic recommitment to PACAF
- Serious approach to anti-access CONOPS
 - Dispersal, hardening, active defense, warning

