

US military plans new war-fighting concept in response to threat from China, Russia

- It involves 'stealth and joint penetration' on land, in the air and at sea, causing simultaneous dilemmas for adversaries to effectively fight back
- US Air Force chief of staff says US\$135 billion budget will be sought for 'penetrating capability'



The F-35 stealth fighter will be the “quarterback” capable of fusing information from all sources and changing tactics in real time from inside enemy airspace, according to General David Goldfein. Photo: MCT

America’s military is developing a new war-fighting concept in response to the threat of conflict with China, Russia and other adversaries, the US Air Force chief of staff said.

General David Goldfein told a Brookings Institution event on Tuesday that the US Army and Air Force would put forward the “concept of operations” within a year and would seek a US\$135 billion budget for “penetrating

capability". The US Marine Corps and Navy were also involved in the planning, the general said.

Goldfein's remarks came as US officials warned that the gap between the US and Chinese militaries was narrowing and expressed concerns that China's rise - backed by its stronger military muscle - would pose a threat to Washington's leadership in global affairs.

China has stepped up the modernisation of its military in recent years but experts generally agreed that the People's Liberation Army still lagged behind the US in areas such as air and naval forces as well as missile capabilities.

According to Goldfein, the stated purpose of the new concept was to carry out "stealth and joint penetration" in adversaries' territories on land, in the air and at sea, causing simultaneous dilemmas for the opposing forces to effectively fight back.

In this joint penetrating team, Goldfein said the F-35, the US Air Force's most advanced stealth fighter, would be the "quarterback" capable of fusing information from all sources and changing tactics in real time from inside enemy airspace.

"If a China or a Russia or an another adversary on the globe ever were to see a F-35 inside their airspace," Goldfein said, "I would love to send them all messages with two words - 'we're here'.

"It's not - 'I'm here'," he said, "a F-35 will never be alone."

Specifically, he said US special forces would be simultaneously "on the ground" and tactical submarines would be "below the surface" in such a scenario.

Goldfein also said the idea of this war-fighting concept "is that - we're here; we're here for a while; we've been watching you; we know what's going on and we've already penetrated whatever the defences you think you have".

"It's about using our asymmetric advantage as a joint team to be able to bring all of our capabilities to bear on an adversary so that we can

overwhelm them and cause so many simultaneous dilemmas for them that either they would choose not to take us on ... or that they can't counter [us]," he said.

In doing so, the US military would be able to "attack an enemy's weaknesses as opposed to attacking their strengths", Goldfein added. "It's a fundamental change for us as much culturally as technically."

Source: <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/2187006/us-military-plans-new-war-fighting-concept-response-threat>

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