

Statement of
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Commander, United States Space Command
Before the
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives

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Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, thank you for the opportunity to be here today on behalf of the newest combatant command, United States Space Command. It is my honor and pleasure to appear before this Committee, representing the dedicated men and women of U.S. Space Command and the vital mission that they perform on behalf of the United States.

As outlined in the 2022 National Defense Strategy, space is fundamental to all joint military operations. Space touches our lives every day; it is critical to our way of life because it enables modern finance, navigation, communication, and many other capabilities vital to our society and economy. In keeping with goals of the National Defense Strategy, U.S. Space Command operates around the world providing satellite communications; space domain awareness; offensive and defensive space control effects; positioning, navigation, and timing services; transregional missile defense; and defense of the national security space architecture 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days per year.

Given the criticality of these missions both to national security and our global way of life, since day one of my tenure as the Commander of U.S. Space Command, I have been building, strengthening, and reinforcing the readiness of the Command, with focus on (1) mission success; (2) taking care of our people; and (3) being fiscally responsible. The Joint Force relies on assured access to space capabilities in the face of rapidly increasing threats from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and from the Russian Federation. U.S. Space Command staff must be capable of

integrating these critical global capabilities in partnership with the other combatant commands, numerous agencies across the federal government, a growing list of international Allies and partners, and the increasingly capable commercial sector. I remain committed to ensuring U.S. Space Command is ready to accomplish its assigned missions now and in the future amid an increasingly dynamic threat environment.

Accelerating Threats in Space

As I testified before the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee in March of this year, challenges to a safe, secure, stable, and sustainable space domain are increasing. The PRC and Russia continue to field capabilities with the intent of putting the space assets of the United States, our Allies, and our partners at risk. As further discussed below, the PRC and Russia are pursuing diverse counterspace capabilities across multiple domains—including cyberspace, electronic warfare (EW), directed energy, and anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons—potentially resulting in temporarily deceiving, disrupting, or denying space services or permanently degrading or destroying space-based capabilities. These capabilities are designed to deter a U.S. response to conflict or crisis and ultimately diminish U.S. influence and military effectiveness.

Over the past four years, these competitors' actions have motivated and focused U.S. Space Command to prepare the United States to counter threats in, to, and from space. Today, I would like to highlight some of those key efforts.

In 2019, we rapidly established a 24/7 Joint Operations Center (JOC), the focal point for all friendly and threat information to accomplish our assigned missions. In 2021 our JOC monitored, tracked, and reported China's first fractional orbital bombardment system (FOBS) launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) with a hypersonic glide vehicle. Flying

more than 40,000 kilometers and for more than an hour and half, this was the longest flight of any PRC land attack weapon system. This system could enable the PRC to rapidly launch weapons that challenge missile warning and missile defense architectures. Then, in November 2021, the JOC monitored Russia's destructive ASAT test in real time and allowed me to ensure that national leaders had the best information available. With respect to China's ASAT capabilities, in January 2022, a PRC satellite moved a defunct PRC satellite to a high grave-yard orbit above geosynchronous orbit (GEO), demonstrating China's capability to grapple satellites with its robotic arm-equipped satellites. More recently, the JOC has been closely monitoring Russia's counterspace capabilities—to include cyber-attacks and electromagnetic interference against satellite communications networks—deployed in the Ukraine conflict.

As part of our emphasis on countering China and Russia's space capabilities, the U.S. Space Command Directorate of Intelligence created signals intelligence rapid analysis capability and confirmed the capability of non-traditional sensors to provide operational intelligence in space. The Directorate of Plans completed the very first Secretary of Defense-approved operational plan for space. In addition, in June of this year, U.S. Space Command, in partnership with Indo-Pacific Command, conducted its first 24/7 joint exercise, which served as a major step in validating the headquarters staff as a synchronized team. U.S. Space Command also spearheaded space warfighting doctrine development and led the process to update Joint Doctrine Publication 3-14, Space Operations.

Focus on Readiness

Since its inception in August of 2019, rapidly building operational readiness has been the top priority at U.S. Space Command. When the Department of Defense established U.S. Space Command, then-Secretary of Defense Esper gave direction to its first Commander, General John

“Jay” Raymond, to focus on readiness, and later approved the Command’s request to accelerate military assignments to propel us toward this goal. When I took command in the summer of 2020, Secretary Esper reiterated that same direction to me.

In August 2019, the initial U.S. Space Command team consisted of approximately 200 personnel and depended heavily on the workforce of both Air Force Space Command and U.S. Strategic Command, which had previously been assigned the space mission. As the U.S. Space Command staff grew, those dependencies abated. Today, U.S. Space Command no longer depends on the workforce of either organization to perform its day-to-day tasks.

U.S. Space Command’s growth and focus on readiness has translated into the accomplishment of significant tasks and milestones. U.S. Space Command works very closely with the Department of the Air Force, our designated Combatant Command Support Agent (CCSA), to meet our obligations and initiate actions necessary to build readiness. With all these accomplishments, U.S. Space Command has demonstrated it is an extremely capable organization earlier than anticipated. This Command has significantly reduced the risk to our space architecture, and with continued support and resources, will continue to accomplish its assigned missions.

U.S. Space Command Headquarters

After a robust and thorough basing selection process, the President announced on July 31, 2023, the permanent location for the U.S. Space Command headquarters as Colorado Springs, Colorado. I welcome and fully support the President’s final decision on the location of U.S. Space Command’s permanent headquarters.

U.S. Space Command’s principal role in supporting this process was to identify the original headquarters requirements for the permanent location. A central element of those

requirements is a trained workforce. Including representatives from partner organizations sitting within the headquarters, the projected seating requirement for the headquarters facility is approximately 1,450. To meet the accelerating threat, we have focused on rapidly achieving these workforce objectives and building out our capabilities.

In 2021 and 2022, the DoD Office of Inspector General (OIG) evaluated the Air Force's process leading up to its January 2021 selection of the preferred permanent location for the U.S. Space Command Headquarters. Upon completion of its review, OIG recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct a review of the concerns expressed by senior military leaders regarding full operational capability (FOC) for USSPACECOM. In May 2022, the Secretary of Defense gave this direction to the Secretary of the Air Force, and the Air Force began a review of risks to operational capability associated with a move from the provisional headquarters location.

In April 2023, I, as Commander of U.S. Space Command, updated the Secretary of the Air Force that U.S. Space Command would achieve FOC earlier than projected. Our FOC criteria focus on executing our mission on our worst day, when we are needed the most. They consist of five criteria: 1) accomplishing our Unified Command Plan mission alongside global campaigning, exercising, and responding to crisis; 2) having the right numbers of skills across our human capital; 3) having the infrastructure needed to support command and control across our mission and business functions; 4) having the necessary command processes and functions in place; and 5) being able to set the conditions and requirements for the future fight. I also relayed my firm view to the Secretary of the Air Force that a move from the provisional headquarters over the next decade would result in a degradation of U.S. Space Command readiness and that this degradation in readiness would coincide with the forecasted attainment by the PRC of full

military modernization. In my experience, such a move would pose unnecessary risk and uncertainty on retention and recruitment of our trained workforce. Based on the nature of the threat and the rapid progress in U.S. Space Command's operational capability, a move presented a high risk to our mission and force at a pivotal time.

In my view, selecting Colorado Springs as the permanent basing location for U.S. Space Command best sustains our human capital investment, is fiscally responsible, and ultimately maintains our readiness at the highest levels while imposing the least disruption to mission and workforce. This opinion reflects my long-standing views, which have not changed. This is especially important as our pacing challenge, the PRC, is working to accelerate its modernization and develop the capabilities it assesses are needed to compel unification with Taiwan and counterbalance the United States by 2027. We are in a critical and strategic competition; we do not have time to lose.