

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
UNITED STATES SENATE

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2025 U.S. Space Force Budget Request for Military Readiness

STATEMENT OF: General Michael A. Guetlein, Vice Chief of Space Operations
United States Space Force

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INTRODUCTION

Chair Hirono; Ranking Member Sullivan; distinguished members of the subcommittee; thank you for the opportunity to testify before this body, and the American public, on the military readiness of the Space Force and our continued efforts to sustain such readiness into the future. On behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force, the Honorable Frank Kendall, and the Chief of Space Operations (CSO), General B. Chance Saltzman, I am honored to share the Space Force's readiness vision for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025.

Space superiority is the foundation of the joint force, and we cannot achieve joint success without it. The demand for space forces outpaces resources by a significant margin. If we want to remain on top, the nation must continue to invest in the United States Space Force and develop the capabilities to deter and if necessary, defeat aggression in space and around the globe. The Space Force must be resourced to protect our critical space-based services from adversary attacks, and to deny an adversary the hostile use of its space capabilities against our personnel.

Since its creation, the Space Force has pushed the boundaries of what it means to be a Military Service. Our Guardians demonstrate the unique capability, resolve, and experience necessary to effectively secure and control the space domain in support of our nation's defense. Even so, our competitors continue to mature their counterspace capabilities, both publicly and covertly, which is why the Space Force must remain vigilant to retain its readiness and capability advantages.

Recent actions by both the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, including space-related cyber-attacks, direct ascent anti-satellite demonstrations, and counterspace weapons development, demonstrate they do not seek peaceful access to space; but rather intend to conduct aggressive actions that could deny the United States the free use and benefits of space. Reports concerning specific counterspace capabilities exhibit the extent these threats pose to our Service members, the American public, and our very way of life. The United States Space Force will continue to significantly contribute to our Nation's integrated deterrence and resolve to maintain the most effective space forces in the world.

As Secretary Kendall and General Saltzman recently unveiled in February 2024, the Department of the Air Force (DAF) is undergoing a Department-wide effort to optimize the way both the Air Force and Space Force organize, train, and equip to meet the PRC pacing challenge. In the face of rising threats and dangerous shifts in the strategic environment, the DAF designed this effort to enhance our ability to effectively deter our competitors, and ultimately, prevail in conflict should such deterrence fail. We have seen these threats emerge rapidly, particularly in space as it has transformed from a benign environment to a contested domain. To address these challenges, the Space Force will reoptimize its readiness to meet the pacing challenge. At the direction of Secretary Kendall and General Saltzman, the Space Force is:

- Establishing Space Futures Command as a fourth Field Command to develop and validate concepts, conduct experimentation and wargames, and perform mission area design;
- Formalizing Space Force Combat Squadrons as our Units of Action and accelerating implementation of the Space Force Generation model (SPAFORGEN);
- Delivering an Operational Test and Training Infrastructure (OTTI) to provide our Guardians with the most realistic, dynamic, and effective training solutions available anywhere.
- Implementing readiness standards that reflect operations under contested conditions rather than those of a permissive environment;
- Conducting a series of nested and synchronized exercises in the Space Force that increase in scope and complexity, fit within a broader DAF-level framework, and progress through a Service-level, data-driven process to measure readiness;

- Activating service components within combatant commands, providing commanders with space integration and synchronization assets they need to conduct all domain operations; and
- Redesigning career paths to produce Guardians that meet our high-tech operational demands.

Meeting the pacing challenge, while also managing acute and persistent threats, requires the Space Force to retain both agility and expertise; one without the other risks unacceptable tradeoffs to our strategic interests, the safety of our people and assets, and continued peaceful access to space. Underpinning our success in, from, and to the space domain is the Space Force's ability to field combat-ready forces and ensure our Guardians have the tools, training, and equipment required to prevail in a modern, all-domain fight. Continuing to fund Space Force readiness will remain essential to our Nation's defense now and in the future. The President's FY 2025 budget request appropriately balances our readiness requirements to deter aggression and be prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary.

EVOLVING SPACE FORCE READINESS IN FY 2025

Future Force Design

Since its inception, the Space Force has taken steps to improve its force design structure and "right-size" its acquisition, talent management, and organizational strategies to best serve its organize, train, and equip mission set. Through the Space Warfighting Analysis Center (SWAC), we initiated a methodical process to produce the most ideal set of future capabilities required for existing and emerging operational needs, threats, and costs.

Recognizing the need to effectively implement future force designs, we are prioritizing efforts to be forward-looking and maintain long-term readiness advantages in both capability and posture. As such, the CSO ordered the establishment of a Space Futures Command aimed at providing better-defined structure, processes, and integration of our force design efforts. This new Field Command will develop and validate concepts, conduct experimentation and wargames, and perform mission area design.

Joint operations require extensive inclusion of space capabilities. A Space Futures Command will ensure the Space Force force design is comprehensive with technically sound capabilities, innovative doctrinal approaches to force employment, force structures organized for resilience and effectiveness, and training practices designed to retain competitive advantages in the face of the pacing challenge. We must have greater awareness of the materiel and assets our force requires, and the corresponding facilities and personnel needed to accomplish our missions. We must incorporate more proactive and applicable leadership and educational opportunities for our service members, and we must strengthen our people and facilities for the challenges ahead. This is a Department of Defense (DOD)-wide effort, but as the newest service, the Space Force has both the most ground to cover and the most agility to deliver operationally effective warfighting capabilities.

Effective force design analysis and recommendations are essential to delivering well-equipped, combat ready space forces, and the Space Force will leverage Space Futures Command to ensure high-fidelity modeling and analysis that balances fulfilling current operational requirements while transitioning to the force we need today.

Commercial Space Strategy

The pacing challenge requires that the United States, and the Space Force in particular, leverage the full breadth and depth of our commercial sector. The United States retains a significant advantage in commercial activities, which offer us key opportunities to bolster our space capabilities and sustain our readiness posture, while simultaneously stimulating the space economy and enabling competition, rapid innovation, and cost-effectiveness. Our commercial partners afford us the ability to exploit what we have,

buy what we can, and build only what we must; particularly as space has become an increasingly competitive and contested domain.

The commercial sector of the United States space enterprise provides us with an immense body of knowledge and innovative capability from which to draw upon. We have the most robust space enterprise in the world, and the partnerships the Space Force has fostered with private industry, academia, and allied nations empower us to act faster and with greater effect than we could alone. This is a critical line of effort for the Space Force, not only because of our fiscal responsibility to the American people, but also for the vast knowledge base we can draw upon to succeed in our mission. Commercial products that can be utilized to meet military needs will provide for a more cost-effective and timely acquisition, which supports the DOD and industry. Further, these partnerships free the DOD to prioritize dedicated products when capability gaps are identified, saving time, resources, and testing for those needs that are not commercially available or are inherently governmental missions.

Consequently, the Space Force developed a Commercial Space Strategy aligned with a broader DOD Commercial Space Integration Strategy, intended to further harness our strategic advantages in the United States commercial sector. This strategy guides our approach in building out a hybrid architecture designed to enhance resiliency and capacity in times of need. The Space Force's Commercial Space Strategy informs methods of integrating critical goods, services, and other activities already validated and tested by the private sector; improving access to existing and emerging technologies; and meeting our near-, mid-, and long-term architecture goals.

The Space Force Commercial Space Strategy is a new way of approaching industry partnerships, designed to propel our acquisition and operational practices and thinking into the future. As the technology available to and from private industry has advanced, the armed services must adjust our approach. This adjustment must allow the flexibility to onboard innovative and game-changing technologies; this is especially true of space systems. Integrating the products and capabilities found throughout American companies and the research and development community will streamline space operations, fortify our hybrid architecture, and ensure we take a proactive posture against threats.

By utilizing commercial capabilities and systems along with informed requirements, the Space Force will undoubtedly realize an even greater competitive advantage.

International Partnerships

With the increasing inclusion of allied nations in our space activities, we develop stronger coalitions, able to conduct coordinated operations in the space domain. This inclusion will allow us to deliver more resilient capabilities supporting space operations across the conflict continuum. We continue to reduce information sharing and classification barriers with allies to enable combined understanding of the threats, and the needed capabilities to prevail in a conflict, should the need arise.

As our service refines mechanisms to share understanding of the domain, and continues to develop interoperable capabilities through traditional acquisition, we also look to work with allies and partners to collectively harness the power of the international commercial space sector. Our allies have great interest in working with the Space Force to more effectively utilize commercial innovation and capabilities in a coordinated manner. They see the same benefit in the commercial space sector, and we hope to grow opportunities to leverage their innovation to support combined operations with increasingly diverse nations.

Space Force Generation

As an independent military service, the Space Force maintains its own readiness standards, reporting, and development through the SPAFORGEN model. This model affords us the ability to ensure a combat-ready force for all Guardians, whether Employed-in-Place or otherwise. SPAFORGEN ensures that the Space Force can effectively present combat ready space forces to Combatant Commanders and provides Guardians with the time and resources necessary to develop and train to remain agile and effective.

The Space Force measures its readiness based upon the necessary tools, training, and manpower needed to achieve our strategic and tactical requirements. Ultimately, the Space Force must ensure that all our Guardians can effectively rise to the challenge through rigorous development and capability deployment. The Space Force is redefining our readiness reporting to portray our current posture and the presentation of space operators to the Joint Force. To that end, in February 2024, the Space Force transitioned from the Air Force Input Tool to the new Space Force Input Tool to support our service-specific, employed-in-place readiness inputs for the Defense Readiness Reporting System.

In accordance with law, the Space Force presents forces and capabilities that underpin all instruments of our military power, and as mandated by Congress, the Space Force is responsible for organizing, training, and equipping those forces. The Space Force provides ready and capable operators to commanders worldwide, enabling these commanders to deter threats and, if necessary, prevail in conflict. Once presented, our Space Force Combat Squadrons will serve as unique Units of Action that undertake day-to-day missions for combatant commanders, while retaining our capacity to prepare and ready for high-end fights.

SPAFORGEN ensures that forces presented to Combatant Commanders can execute missions and tasks and are equipped to make appropriate recommendations on the effective employment, task organization, operational synchronization, and command relationships of space forces.

Operational Test and Training Infrastructure

OTTI is an overarching concept describing a collection of programs and capabilities, both live and synthetic, that enable high-end testing and training of Space Force systems and operators against a thinking adversary. The Space Force relies on OTTI investments as a critical component of SPAFORGEN's success, and our overall ability to deliver combat-ready forces throughout readiness cycles. Generally, Space Force's ability to effectively develop, test, and train tactics will create greater and hugely positive impact on operational outcomes. OTTI provides the means to execute those core activities and is a critical component to generating Space Force readiness.

More specifically, OTTI provides Guardians unique and realistic training against simulated adversaries, providing dynamic scenario issues which will prepare Guardians for the most diverse and challenging environments available. Our goal is for Guardians to receive training which prepares them for the threats they may face, therefore, these scenarios will be challenging and hyper-realistic. Producing this capability requires that we create an intelligence-informed accounting of adversary capabilities and invest in high-fidelity, mission-specific simulators. Such testing and training are invaluable to our Guardians and serves to establish a greater, combat-ready force posture.

It is imperative that we adequately invest in our test and training infrastructure so we can better prepare for the "fight tonight", and the President's FY 2025 budget request appropriately prioritizes Space Force OTTI as a critical function of Space Force readiness.

Service Component Activation

The mechanism by which the Space Force ensures full integration and synchronization of space activities throughout the combatant commands is via Space Force Service Components. The Space Force established its first three service components in 2022 at U.S. Indo-Pacific Command via U.S. Space Forces for USINDOPACOM (USSPACEFOR-INDOPAC), U.S. Forces Korea via USSPACEFOR-KOR as a subordinate unit to USSPACEFOR-INDOPAC, and U.S. Central Command via USSPACEFOR-CENT.

In 2023, we established USSPACEFOR-SPACE as the Space Force Service Component to U.S. Space Command and USSPACEFOR-EUCOM/AFRICOM (USSPACEFOR-EUR/AF) as the component to U.S. European Command / U.S. Africa Command and will continue standing up component and sub-component commands as needs may require. The Secretary of the Air Force directed the activation of the remaining Service Components no later than 1 October 2025 and we are on track to achieve that goal.

Facilities and Infrastructure

Space Force Facility, Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization (FSRM) and Military Construction (MILCON) funding enables the Service to prioritize requirements which reduce risk to mission and the force. Structural, electrical, and power improvements to operational facilities reduce risk to mission and enable our joint and coalition partners in the fight, while quality of life infrastructure and facility improvements reduce risk to the force by improving resiliency amongst our Guardians and their families.

Facilities and infrastructure are crucial to Space Force missions which are predominantly employed-in-place from facilities that are often inseparable from the weapon systems employed. While the Space Force does partner with the Air Force for significant logistics, security, medical services, and human resources support, the Space Force's ability to prioritize its unique FSRM and MILCON at our specific installations ensures we appropriately optimize our funding requests and maintain a sufficient, stable, and predictable funding strategy to execute its assigned missions as an independent service. Moving forward, the Space Force will continue to prioritize projects that increase facility and infrastructure resiliency and Service readiness, while balancing the requirements of the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and future projects.

Weapon System Sustainment

Space Force Weapon System Sustainment directly supports the Space Force's ability to sustain the day-to-day readiness of weapon systems performing space missions, including combat power; missile warning/missile tracking; positioning; navigation and timing; satellite communications; space domain awareness; and environment monitoring. Maintaining operations for these systems is critical to ensure homeland and allied defense, and funding for these priorities must be continued for each to not risk opening capability gaps which will increase our vulnerability to adversary systems.

From FY 2024 to FY 2025, the President's budget request prioritizes programmatic and operational readiness in support of the NDS, to include obsolescence mitigation and software maintenance for Upgraded Early Warning Radar and North American Aerospace Defense Command Cheyenne Mountain Complex systems. Moving forward, the Space Force is developing a necessary methodology to identify quantifiable solutions to balance sustainment support and future readiness needs.

Assured Access to Space

The United States requires the capabilities, infrastructure, expertise, and tools necessary to access space on-demand throughout our military, civil, and private enterprises. To support the growing demand to leverage our launch capabilities, the Space Force established Assured Access to Space as the largest organization within Space Systems Command, comprised of Space Launch Delta 45, Space Launch Delta

30, and the Program Executive Office for National Security Space Launch; Rocket System Launch Program; Launch and Test Range System; and Servicing, Mobility, and Logistics.

Assured Access to Space is ultimately responsible for procuring launch services and delivering on-orbit capabilities for the entire National Security Space enterprise. This critical organization manages range sustainment programs in support of the DOD and commercial launch customers and supports three primary objectives: space access; rapid delivery; and orbital resiliency. Assured Access to Space will also transform today's launch sites into modern spaceports, with the capacity and resiliency necessary to ensure our nation's ability to deliver capabilities into space when they are needed.

Assured Access to Space is leading the nation's planning for a new space mobility mission area to deliver space access, maneuver, and logistics capabilities needed to tackle growth in commercial satellite launch cadence and prepare for new operational concepts for mobility in orbit. It includes investment in on-orbit servicing and maneuver prototyping with the Air Force Research Laboratory, the Defense Innovation Unit, and other mission partners.

Spaceport of the Future

For decades, the United States has continuously maintained its space launch infrastructure to meet limited demand from a small customer base. However, as demand for national security, civil, and commercial space capabilities continue to grow, our launch range infrastructure has not modernized sufficiently to meet the significant increase in launch demand. Accordingly, the Space Force undertook a broad effort to analyze our launch infrastructure enterprise and assess range modernization efforts to maximize our ability to support U.S. launch requirements.

The Space Force's Spaceport of the Future is taking a comprehensive approach to look at all factors contributing to range costs and launch throughput. Launch rates rose approximately 30% each of the last two years, and we expect rates to continue to rise through the Future Years Defense Plan. Therefore, the Space Force is prioritizing enhancements so that we have the infrastructure needed to meet these launch demands.

To support the demand, the President's FY 2025 budget request asks Congress to fund our Spaceport of the Future activities to allow for increased launch throughput, enhanced capability, and assured access to space capabilities for the warfighter. Without this critical funding, we will see significant degradation in our infrastructure and our ability to provide launch services for our national security, civil, and commercial partners.

We are thankful that Congress is providing the requisite reimbursement authorities necessary to collect direct and indirect costs incurred by the Space Force associated with launch activities. These authorities will facilitate commercial participation and investment into the United States' launch infrastructure and further our ability to meet growing range demand.

Agile Talent Management

The Space Force sustains its readiness through its most important asset: our people. We need to enable our Guardians to succeed in an agile, adaptable manner to field the greatest space Force in the world. As a result, the Space Force is creating an innovative talent management system, establishing flexible service options and advanced training programs to establish opportunities for all Guardians, including specialized credentialing, academics, experiences with industry partners, and tailored duty experiences to name a few.

The Space Force is also participating in piloting DOD's Defense Civilian Training Corps program, designed to identify university talent, provide scholarships for accepted students, and prepare students for

a career in DOD acquisition-related fields. This pilot program's goal is to create a sustainable pipeline of civilian talent into the service and motivate university students to serve their country as civilian members of the DOD. Additionally, Space Force's existing University Partnership Program further deepens our talent pool and improves enterprise-wide skillset development. Moreover, the Space Force is expanding its space-centered curriculum offerings within DAF educational programs, including Basic Military Training, Non-Commissioned Officer Academy, United States Air Force Academy, Officer Training School, and Reserve Officer Training Corps.

Even though we are the smallest military service, the Space Force places significant emphasis on our recruiting and retention efforts. Given the Space Force's highly technical mission set, we must remain diligent in meeting our recruiting goals and maximize Guardians' flexibility to retain the talent we need to maintain our readiness advantages. While we have not experienced the recruiting challenges other military services have experienced to date, the Space Force needs to sustain its efforts, particularly as we expect to grow in Fiscal Year 2025.

I especially appreciate Congress' support and enactment of the Space Force Personnel Management Act (SFPMA), which creates significant flexibility in how we manage our Service members to augment their skills and increase efficiency in workforce management. In accordance with the SFPMA, the Space Force is quickly moving to integrate its existing active component Guardians with Reserve Airmen in space-focused career fields into one service. This critical authorization allows the Space Force to not only invest in and grow our talent pool, but also to retain such talent by offering Guardians greater flexibility in their professional experiences.

The Space Force will always look to identify more innovative, adaptable, and cutting-edge opportunities in talent management to ensure our Guardians are able to rise to the challenge. Moving forward, the Space Force will refine and expand the ways we provide Guardians with the tools, training, and resources they need to succeed operationally, professionally, and personally.

THE WAY AHEAD

The United States has approached our space activities with a desire to benefit not only Americans, but all people. It remains our goal that space remains open and accessible to all nations and spacefaring actors for peaceful use.

We must continue to ensure this domain is not controlled or threatened by an adversary who does not seek the peaceful use of space. The United States is uniquely capable of maintaining an open environment for all nations in space. Just as we have ensured open access to maritime trade and sea routes, so too will we in space.

Yet, our near-peer competitors are watching our efforts and attempting to preempt, deny, circumvent, and counter our space capabilities. While we are the most recent military service, we are not – and never have been – a new military service. We are built on decades of advances and contributions by dedicated Service members, civil servants, and industry partners who devoted themselves to their country and continue to do so.

These Guardians are stationed around the world in our deltas, combatant commands, and the intelligence community, ready to provide the combat capabilities we need. Our Units of Action will contribute to every combat mission the DOD undertakes. The training exercises and assessments will evolve to simulate warfare of the 21st century. At the center of it all is our readiness posture and our force-wide

endeavor to provide combat decision-makers with the most capable Guardians we can, along with the training and equipment needed to succeed.

Our ability to guarantee access to space is reliant upon our Guardians, our technologies, and our commitment to push ourselves further, faster, and higher. Readiness does not mean purely standing alert; it is a mindset and a quality which requires investment in the mission, in oneself, and in each other. It is ultimately our people who empower us to do what we do; the technology and the tactics only enable our greatest assets to accomplish our nation's needs. The DAF re-optimization effort is as much an investment in our people as it is a restructuring of combat capabilities.

There has never been a more important time for the Space Force to secure our nation's interests, and we must ensure that we are properly resourcing the Space Force to guarantee the ability to achieve space superiority into the future. I truly appreciate this committee's continued support for our Guardians and their mission; and look forward to working with you.