

OPEN LETTER IN SUPPORT OF ESTABLISHING THE U.S. SPACE FORCE
May 2019

This letter expresses our strong support for establishing the U.S. Space Force.

The United States is the world's leader in the exploration and uses of outer space. America's preeminent position in space activities has contributed to the nation's political prestige, international influence, scientific knowledge, technological advancement, homeland security, and national defense. In addition, space contributes powerfully to America's economic prosperity; indeed, practically every aspect of our daily lives is dependent on space capabilities. Consequently, U.S. National Security Strategy has for decades stated that freedom of access to and use of outer space is a vital national interest.

Foreign powers are seeking to undermine the United States' leadership position in space. China and Russia are developing, testing, and fielding space and counterspace weapon systems that threaten our ability to use space for national security and economic purposes, jeopardize U.S. and allied military forces, and put the U.S. homeland at risk. America's long-standing strategic advantage in space is eroding.

National security space organization and management has been a recurring issue for decades. The establishment of the U.S. Space Force as an independent armed service within the Department of the Air Force is a fiscally responsible approach to address the issue. The U.S. Space Force will organize, train, and equip forces to enable U.S. Space Command's plans and operations, to include activities in support of other Combatant Commands and military services. The U.S. Space Force will develop military space culture and ethos; recruit, train, educate, promote, and retain scientists, engineers, and warriors with world-class space skills and talent; advocate for space requirements and resources; develop space doctrine and operational art; develop, field, and deliver advanced space capabilities; and steward resources to sustain America's strategic advantage and preeminence in national security space activities. The establishment of a new military service for space is necessary for putting America on a path to effectively deter conflict from beginning in or extending into space, and, if deterrence fails, to defeat hostile actions and protect our economic and national security interests in space.

We endorse the position of General John Hyten, USAF, Commander of U.S. Strategic Command, who recently testified, "We're going to have a Space Force someday. I think what the Committee has to decide is when is that going to happen, and I think now is the time...you want to get ahead of the problem, not trail it, not come in response to a catastrophe. Get ahead of the problem." And we applaud the statement of General Joseph Dunford, USMC, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who recently testified, "My best military advice, given the importance of space and the consequences of not doing all we can to optimize the Department to move forward in space, would be to move out now with what might be the 80% solution, refine as we go, and the Committee will have an opportunity to provide oversight to address some of the issues that have been raised."

Therefore, we strongly encourage action to establish the U.S. Space Force, to realize the full potential of space power and space capabilities in order to protect and advance U.S. vital national interests.

Dr. William J. Perry

Former US Secretary of Defense

The Honorable Dennis C. Blair

Former Director of National Intelligence

The Honorable Mike McConnell

Former Director of National Intelligence

The Honorable Robert S. Walker

Former Member of Congress and Chairman, House Science Committee

The Honorable Robert O. Work

Former Deputy Secretary of Defense

The Honorable Edward C. "Pete" Aldridge

Former Secretary of the Air Force and Director, National Reconnaissance Office

General Larry D. Welch, USAF (Ret.)

Former Chief of Staff of the Air Force

General Ronald R. Fogleman, USAF (Ret.)

Former Chief of Staff of the Air Force

Admiral James O. Ellis Jr., USN (Ret.)

Former Commander of United States Strategic Command

The Honorable Duane P. Andrews

Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence

General Thomas S. Moorman Jr., USAF (Ret.)

Former Air Force Vice Chief of Staff

General Lester L. Lyles, USAF (Ret.)

Former Air Force Vice Chief of Staff

General Lance W. Lord, USAF (Ret.)

Former Commander, Air Force Space Command

The Honorable Joan Dempsey

Former Deputy Director of Central Intelligence for Community Management

The Honorable Tidal W. McCoy

Former Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs and Acting Secretary of the Air Force

The Honorable Martin C. Faga

Former Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space and Director, National Reconnaissance Office

The Honorable Jeffrey K. Harris

Former Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space and Director, National Reconnaissance Office

The Honorable Keith R. Hall

Former Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space and Director, National Reconnaissance Office

The Honorable Sue C. Payton

Former Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition

The Honorable Charles “Charlie” E. Allen

Former Assistant Director of Central Intelligence for Collection

Mr. Christopher A. Williams

Former Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense

Ambassador Henry F. Cooper

Former Director, Strategic Defense Initiative Organization

Mr. Scott F. Large

Former Director, National Reconnaissance Office

Ms. Letitia A. Long

Former Director, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

Mr. Robert Cardillo

Former Director, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

Mr. Marc J. Berkowitz

Former Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Space Policy

Mr. Douglas L. Loverro

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy

Lieutenant General Donald L. Cromer, USAF (Ret.)

Former Commander, Air Force Space and Missile Center

Vice Admiral David E. Frost, USN (Ret.)

Former Deputy Commander, U.S. Space Command & Vice Commander, NORAD

Lieutenant General Brian A. Arnold, USAF (Ret.)

Former Commander, Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center

Lieutenant General Michael Hamel, USAF (Ret.)

Former Commander, Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center

Vice Admiral Robert B. Murrett, USN (Ret.)

Former Director, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

Lieutenant General Ronald L. Burgess, USA (Ret.)

Former Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

Lieutenant General J. Kevin McLaughlin, USAF (Ret.)

Former Deputy Commander, United States Cyber Command and Professional Staff, Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization (Rumsfeld Commission)

Mr. Gary E. Payton

Former Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for Space

Mr. Richard McKinney

Former Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for Space

Major General Donald G. Hard, USAF (Ret.)

Former Director of Space and SDI Programs, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition

Major General Howard Mitchell, USAF (Ret.)

Former National Security Space Architect

Mr. David A. Kier

Former Deputy Director, National Reconnaissance Office and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Space)

Brigadier General Sebastian F. Coglitore, USAF (Ret.)

Former Commander, 30th Space Wing, Vandenberg AFB, CA

Colonel Pamela A. Melroy, USAF (Ret.)

Former NASA Astronaut

Mr. A. Thomas Young

Chairman, Independent Assessment Panel on the Organization and Management of National Security Space (Allard Commission)