

Chairman Mike Rogers –Remarks to  
2017 Space Symposium  
April 4, 2017

(I. Introduction)

Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

Pete, thank you for that kind introduction, and thank you and SES Government Solutions for hosting the breakfast this morning.

I'd also like thank the Space Foundation, and specifically Admiral Ellis for putting on this wonderful event.

12,000 participants with 106 speakers over the course of a week is no small feat, and to do it every year for 33 years is even more impressive.

I'm also aware that my friend and colleague, and dedicated space supporter, Congressman Bridenstine is also here. Jim, I appreciate you being here.

Lastly, I'd also like to recognize General Jay Raymond, the Commander of Air Force Space Command, General William Shelton, the former commander of Air Force Space Command and the current Vice Chairman of the Space Foundation Board of Directors, and Lieutenant General Sam Greaves, Commander of the Space and Missile Systems Center.

Generals Raymond, Shelton and Greaves are great Americans who helped us make a lot of progress in preparing for a contested space environment.

So, here's a question for you: Who is the next Jay Raymond, Willie Shelton and Sam Greaves? Let's look out five or ten years. Now, hold that thought for a moment.

Last month, on March 14th, the Department of Defense published the Air Force list of Colonels that are being nominated to become 1-star Generals. There are 37 nominees on that list.

Would anyone like to guess how many were career

space professionals, like then-Colonel Raymond, Colonel Shelton and Colonel Greaves? [Pause for effect – or maybe try to get the audience to engage]

None. [Pause]

Admittedly, there were a few career acquisitions officers who did tours in and out of space assignments, but no career space professionals.

Would you like to know how many of them were pilots? Any guesses? 25 officers. That is 67% of the next class of Air Force Generals.

I have no doubt that these are 37 outstanding leaders, but if we are looking for our next General

Jay Raymond, General Willie Shelton, General John Hyten, and Lieutenant General Sam Greaves, who are all career space professionals; then we don't have one in this group, and I don't think that is good for being ready for the threats we face in space.

But it also revealing as to the status and priority that space is given in the Air Force's current organizational construct.

(II. Problems)

Einstein once said that "If I had an hour to solve a problem I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions."

So, I'm going to take my cue from Einstein and spend most of the time identifying the problems today; and, before you run out of the room here folks, rest assured, I won't spend an hour talking about this.

So, first – let me discuss the problems as I see them as the Chairman of the HASC subcommittee that oversees national security space.

I certainly don't need to explain to this crowd how important space is to our national security, our warfighters, our economy, and our way of life.

And I also don't need to explain to you all how space is not the peaceful domain we would all want it to be.

Potential adversaries are developing weapons to take out our space systems in a conflict. It is now a warfighting domain.

And if you haven't seen the CNN Special called, "War in Space", then I highly recommend you watch it.

Just go to Google, type that title in and you can watch the segment. After viewing this segment you can officially start referring to General Shelton as "Hollywood".

I give a lot of credit to the DoD for supporting this effort and providing such a candid view of the current situation. I hope DoD does more of it. We

have to tell the American people what our potential adversaries are planning for us.

Now this national security threat didn't develop overnight.

The most visible sign of the growing threat was in 2007 when the Chinese blew up one of their own satellites in a test of an anti-satellite missile.

Folks, that was 10 years ago.

While potential adversaries have gotten a lot more capable, we've spent the better part of those 10 years admiring the problem. And in some ways we may have made matters worse with more bureaucracy.

I know there are great people in this room and elsewhere in the Department that are working tirelessly to address the space security problem, and they are starting to make progress, but a light is now flashing red for us to act boldly if we expect to maintain our ability to fight and win wars, whether on land, sea, in the air, or, yes, in space.

And if you don't believe me – I'll read you a quote from General John Hyten, Commander of U.S. Strategic Command who stated, without space “you go back to World War II. You go back to industrial age warfare.”

We all remember the massive casualty numbers of previous wars, and while satellites do not have mothers and fathers, those who depend on these systems do.

So I ask myself, do we have the organizational structure we need to get us where we need to go?

Obviously the answer is no.

What initially got my attention on the national security space organization and management issue was a GAO study that was briefed to me last summer.

What was most shocking for me was that most of

the information in the study was not new – this was at least the 3rd time this issue was studied over the 16 year period, starting with the Rumsfeld Commission, and each time they reached the same result.

As the Rumsfeld Commission clearly stated, we are “not yet arranged or focused to meet the national security space needs of the 21st century”.

So since last summer – I've made space organization and management my #1 priority for the rest of this Congress.

I, along with my friend and Ranking Member, Jim Cooper, and the other members of my

subcommittee have been conducting extensive oversight of this topic.

So, what are those problems?

First, space organization and decision making is extremely fragmented.

For instance – when we asked the Department for an organizational chart so that we could understand who was involved in making decisions in the national security space enterprise and who was in charge below the level of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, the answer was “we don’t have one.”

So we asked the GAO – since they did the study and

their response was: “we tried, and couldn’t figure it out, so here’s the list of 60 offices who are involved in national security space.” Please see the screen for GAO’s slide.

So I then asked my staff to do it – the great thing about staff is they can’t say “no”.

This is what my staff came up with. Please see the screen again.

So who’s in charge beneath the Deputy and Secretary of Defense? Well, a whole lot of people.

And when everyone is in charge, no one is in charge.

Some might say the “Principal DoD Space Advisor” is in charge.

However when the word “Advisor” is in the title, by definition, they’re not in charge.

The PDSA is also tied-up with another job, being the Secretary of the Air Force.

Does anyone think there might be a conflict of interest between space and the Air Force’s other priorities? Hmm...

Moreover, anyone count how many of these leaders on this org chart are separately Senate-confirmable?

In other words, we won’t have a complete space team in place until as many as 10 people are nominated and confirmed?

My point is there are too many chiefs in this particular camp.

Additionally, the operational, acquisition, and resourcing authorities are not aligned – just take a look at the chart my staff created.

For example, while General Hyten was at Air Force Space Command, he and his team worked very hard to develop a “Space Enterprise Vision” for the future. They did it on their own – they weren’t directed to

by some higher authority worried about space.

But while General Hyten was able to provide a vision, I don’t believe he ever had the authority to actually implement it.

Those decisions rested in the hands of multiple other offices. Dozens of them.

Even the best leaders can’t succeed in a system when everyone can say “no” but, no one is truly accountable and empowered to say “yes”.

Now I contrast the military space program with the National Reconnaissance Office.

The Director of the NRO has the operational, acquisition, and resourcing authorities aligned, in what is often termed “cradle to grave” authority.

Essentially every single expert I have talked to tells me that the NRO is generally working well under this model.

To the credit of General Goldfein, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, he’s seen my chart and publically stated that 60 voices is “no way to run a railroad”.

But I’m not sure as to whether the Chief is ready to do what is necessary to fix this railroad.

This is a system that moves too slowly, and we don’t

have the time to wait. And I won’t.

Next,

Space is not being given the priority it should be. That is because of the way it is organized in the services.

National Security Space is competing with other service priorities. For example, the Air Force has 90% of the budget for military space, but the Air Force has 12 “core functions” that it budgets for, and space is just one of them.

And who here thinks national security space is the #1 priority for the Chief of Naval Operations or the

Chief of Staff of the Army?

Everyone here has heard the phrase, “put your money where your mouth is”. Which just means, if it’s important to you, you’ll put money behind it.

That’s how we in Congress gauge whether something is truly important to a federal department: is the department willing to ask for money for that thing?

According to the Office of the Secretary of Defense Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation office, the unclassified satellite R&D funding is at a 30 year low right now.

I know sequestration is tough on the services, but I’m pretty sure that Air Force aircraft R&D is not at a 30 year low.

Some might say that isn’t a fair statistic because many of our military satellites are in production now, and the R&D funding is not a good comparison.

So let’s take the total R&D and Procurement of Air Force space and compare it to the Air Force total R&D and Procurement instead.

My staff and I checked,

and we started looking from the Fiscal Year 2012 budget as a baseline, and then we compared to fiscal

year 2013 – the year the Defense Sequester kicked in.

Space investment declined 28% the year of the sequester.

The total Air Force investment declined 13% that year.

Ok, so, they both go down.

But here’s where it gets really revealing. What happens after fiscal year 2013?

Where did the Air Force put its money?

If we project the budget out through 2021 as based on last year’s Air Force budget request, military space R&D and procurement remains down 23 percent.

And remember the Air Force represents 90 percent of the military space program.

Space never recovers from the sequester cuts of 2013.

How about the total Air Force R&D and procurement investment during that same period?

It's up 30%!

So to recap – over the 10 year period – Air Force national security space investment is down 23%, total Air Force investment up 30%.

Now, I'll stop talking about numbers, and let's talk about a specific program: the weather satellite program.

After providing key weather collection capabilities from space since the 1960s, the Air Force was willing to walk away from providing DoD satellite collection for the top 2 priority joint weather requirements, and instead rely solely on civil and international sources which did not meet other DoD user requirements.

And in the meantime it was willing to throw away a perfectly good weather satellite – DMSP 20 - that was built, and upgraded, with over half a billion of taxpayer's dollars spent on it.

If nothing else, that satellite may have paid for itself by helping to focus me and my committee on the problems we're facing in national security space organization and management.

The next key problem is that we are not prioritizing and developing the men and women of the national security space community.

The Air Force will say it is a good steward for space. And I think its leadership genuinely believes it is.

But with the promotion statistics and budgets and program decisions I told you about in the beginning, does this sound like good stewardship?

Are we telling the men and women of national security space that they are important when the Generals' stars overwhelmingly go to pilots?

How can we have the world's best national security space program if we don't grow and retain the best men and women to lead it, and give them the budget and authority they need?

Separately, out at the Air Force Space and Missiles Systems Center – according to the CAPE “SMC does

not appear to compete favorably for senior officers (~65% fill rate for Captains and above, versus 150% fill rate for Lieutenants)”

And I hear a lot from the Air Force about pilot shortages. In the warfighting domain of space, what is the Air Force space operator shortage?

And how about professional military education?

According to an official at the Air University space is only covered for a total of 2 hours in each of the year-long Air Command and Staff College and Air War College masters programs, aside from an optional elective class.

If space is meant to be integrated into the Air Force, and help its members advance space-power thinking, how can that be done during only 2 hours of the year-long professional development programs for the future leaders?

The total class hours for Air Command and Staff College is 450 hours. 2 hours of that for space is equivalent to half of 1 percent.

Further, space professionals are not managed in a holistic manner, despite calls to do that.

In 2001, then-Secretary Rumsfeld directed the Air Force to create a space career management plan for military and civilian personnel, and include the

various career fields.

Unfortunately there is no formal Air Force space career field outside of space operations.

This makes me wonder if even the Secretary of Defense is in charge of the Air Force space program?

The Air Force used to give a space badge (or space wings) to both acquisitions and operations officers – however they changed that a few years ago to just give it to just operations officers.

There is a lack of development of a “tribe” mentality, a unified group of space warfighting professionals.

This is a cultural issue.

How you promote, pay and retain your people tells you whether or not they’re important to you.

And I don’t like what I’m seeing here when it comes to national security space. And meanwhile, the Army has over 4,000 space cadre professionals including military and civilian personnel.

If you do space work in the Army, and have the appropriate training and experience, then you get a space badge. This is how they identify themselves. It is pride in their warfighting specialty.

It doesn't matter if you are doing planning, or acquisitions, or operations: a space professional is a space professional in the Army.

Of note, you can actually find Army soldiers with a space badge on their uniform.

And as an Army officer informally told my staff: he remarked that "it is the ugliest badge in the Army, but every soldier wants it".

The Army gets the significance of creating a culture behind key domains of warfighting, whether its infantry, armor, paratroopers, or space.

Lastly, we need to integrate our space program

much better. It needs to be a priority.

I'm going to stop picking on the Air Force for a little and pick on the Navy now.

The Navy operates the Mobile User Objective System (or MUOS) satellite program, which is essentially like a cell phone tower in space.

It's going to be a great capability – and we have 5 satellites on orbit – the first of which launched in 2012.

Yet, for years, 90 percent of the capabilities for the satellite constellation could not be used because of delays with a joint program developing user

terminals.

This is just unacceptable for a \$7 billion program that provides a key warfighting capability. More recently, operational test & evaluation of the satellite and ground segments has identified problems that are exacerbating this gap in full capability service.

We see these integration challenges on practically every space program, whether it's the Family of Beyond the Line of Sight (FAB-T) terminals, M-code use for GPS, Space-Based Infrared Systems ground processing.

Someone needs to do a better job pulling this all

together. Can anyone say who in DoD is responsible? Probably because no one is in charge.

Related to integration in the military space program, we also have to make sure that the NRO and the military programs are working closely together.

The Joint Interagency Combined Space Operations Center (JICSpOC) was stood up quickly to achieve a working-level unity of effort in the near term.

For the longer term, we must ensure that the national security space community is fully coordinated for a high-end conflict in space.

So – I have talked about a fragmentation, lack of priority, lack of a focus on space culture and development of a military profession, and a poorly integrated program.

And this is all in the face of a serious and growing foreign threat which is attempting to knock out one of our primary advantages for how we fight and win wars.

Ok, so what do we do about it?

(III. Historical Context)

Before I answer that, I'd like to take you back in time, for a little historical frame of reference.

We stand here today in the year commemorating the 70th anniversary of the creation of the Air Force, but the origins of the Air Force actually go back 40 years earlier to 1907, with the founding of the “Aeronautical Division” of the U.S. Army Signal Corps.

Even in those early years, bold airmen realized that the full promise of air power could not be attained if it simply remained a division of another Army Corps.

Well before Billy Mitchell or the Hap Arnold, who would come along much later, Infantryman Captain

Paul Beck wrote, in 1912, an article in the Infantry Journal entitled, Military Aviation in America: Its Needs.

In this article, he advocated for a “permanent organization”, as essential to the success of American Aviation and laying out the first doctrinal aspects of Air Power.

We look back today and know that Beck did not have it exactly right, but his basic argument was sound—if you wanted to win in the Air, you needed a career steeped in air pursuits and not beholden to the demands of the Signal Corps or the Army itself.

Over the next decade the air mission was a subject

of re-occurring debate, study, and organizational change while Air leaders pushed the organization forward, and Army leadership generally regarded air functions as an augmentation to Army ground forces.

By 1926, there were various viewpoints in Congress, including some who sought an independent Air Force.

It was not time however, and Congress instead adopted the Air Corps Act, which officially created the Army Air Corps.

The legislation included an important provision of establishing an Assistant Secretary of War for Air to

“help foster military aeronautics”.

Congress recognized the need to create a steward of airpower at a sufficient level.

This position is the direct lineage to the position of a future Secretary of the Air Force.

The next significant change happened in 1935, in part to quell the continued voices of separation.

The Army relented to these calls and created the General Headquarters of the Air Force, reporting directly to the Army Chief of Staff.

The aim was to prevent further movement to separation—but it did nothing of the sort.

Gen Frank Andrews, the Air Force General Headquarters commander, immediately began to advocate for a separate force stating:

“I don't believe any balanced plan to provide the nation with an adequate, effective Air Force... can be obtained, within the limitations of the War Department budget, and without providing an organization, individual to the needs of such an Air Force. Legislation to establish such an organization. . .will continue to appear until this turbulent and vital problem is satisfactorily solved.”

Next, with wartime demands at their highest, President Roosevelt issued an executive order on 9

March 1942 which took the next step towards a separate Air Force by creating an Army Air Force under a single Commanding General, but still within the Army.

It finally took an Act of Congress in 1947, after the War ended, to create today's Air Force as a separate military service.

The rest, as they say, is history, and it's a proud history at that.

Now I went through all that detail for a reason--I find it particularly instructive that from 1907 when we formed a fledging Aeronautical Division until 1947

when a fully independent military service was created, the Army position was that air power was there to support the ground, and that air forces worked best when integrated with ground forces.

There were procurement problems and there were operational problems that kept telling us that things were not quite right, but still, Army orthodoxy insisted that the Army's Generals knew better than the airmen that served beneath them.

They didn't.

So, regarding space, if the creation of the Air Force is a guide, where are we in the timeline, and how does it end?

(IV: Way-ahead)

My vision for the future is a separate Space Force within the Department of Defense, just like the Air Force, which had to be separated from the Army in order to be prioritized and become a world-class military service.

Simply put, space must be a priority and it can't be one if you jump out of bed in the morning thinking about fighters and bombers first.

And don't get me wrong, I want planes and pilots to be priorities for the Air Force!

But as I said earlier: Bernoulli's law is not the same as Kepler's laws. You cannot organize, train, and equip in space like you can a fighter jet squadron.

But I am not suggesting radical surgery. The amputation will not begin tomorrow. Everyone can breathe a sigh of relief.

That said, I believe bold reform is needed and it must start now.

I'm not going to tell you now what that will look like – you will start to see that in my subcommittee's Mark this year and next.

But, here are the principles that are guiding my view

of the way forward:

First – we need to reduce bureaucracy, clarify roles and responsibilities, and have a person leading this effort who wakes up every day and thinks about how to have the best military space program in the world – and actually has the authorities to make it happen and will be held accountable to do it.

Take a look at that organization chart again.

What you see there is what we in the South know as “kudzu”. It’s a voracious weed that grows and grows and grows and strangles the life out of a garden.

We need to start ripping some of that out by the roots.

Again, I’m not trying to denigrate the good men and women who work in those organizations.

But, we must have clear lines of responsibility and accountability, and this chart isn’t it.

The kudzu has to go.

Second – space needs to be put on par with the other domains of conflict – Land, Air, Sea, and Cyber. And we need to go beyond just the words, it cannot remain a subservient mission.

And until the day comes that we have a separate

Space Force, then the funding needs to be protected above the services, so the space accounts are not raided by the air or other service missions.

Third – There needs to be a clearly identified cadre of space professionals who are trained, promoted, sustained as space experts.

Air Force leaders have talked about normalizing space, and treating space as a warfighting domain.

All other domains of air, land, and sea have established cultures, professions, identifiers--it’s time for space to have the same.

At the end of the day, we all know that it comes down to people.

Fourth – We need an integrated national security space program.

I’m not looking to combine the NRO and military program, but I am looking to ensure the military and NRO work closely together, especially in this new warfighting domain, and that OSD’s oversight of both of these elements of the space program is rationally organized.

Additionally, we need to improve the synchronization of terminal-satellite-ground deliveries -- someone has to be in charge of and accountable for that.

(V: Conclusion)

I'd be remiss if I didn't say that we have the world's best military, and the world's best Air Force.

For instance, in Iraq and Syria, the Air Force has led 65% of the more than 17,000 coalition airstrikes since 2014.

They are delivering firepower in partnership with joint, special operations, and coalition ground forces to defeat and degrade ISIS and regain critical territory.

However, we have to acknowledge the national security space organizational structure is broken, and, we are at a time when space is contested like never before.

In fact, we stand a very real possibility of losing our advantages in space to potential adversaries.

This is not a question of having good people. It is a question of what structure we put them in, and do the people in charge of them have the real authority to enable success?

As history has shown, it is very hard for a government bureaucracy to fix itself.

But this is exactly why Congressional oversight exists.

It is the job of the Armed Services Committees to recognize when the bureaucracy is broken, and to then see that it is fixed.

Now, this will be a collaborative process, but we are going to change the system before it's too late.

So, let's all be clear: now is not the time for Hail Mary efforts to stop reform.

Now is also not the time to create additional boxes on that chart without taking others away.

At the end of the day we need to align accountability with authority, reduce bureaucracy, and deconflict with other mission areas in order to prioritize the space investments and the people charged with the warfighting domain of space.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress and in the Defense Department to ensure we continue to have the world's best national security space program long into the future.

It must be as world-class as our Army, our Navy, our Marines, and our Air Force.

It must be as good as the University of Alabama football program. Roll Tide!

Thank you.