



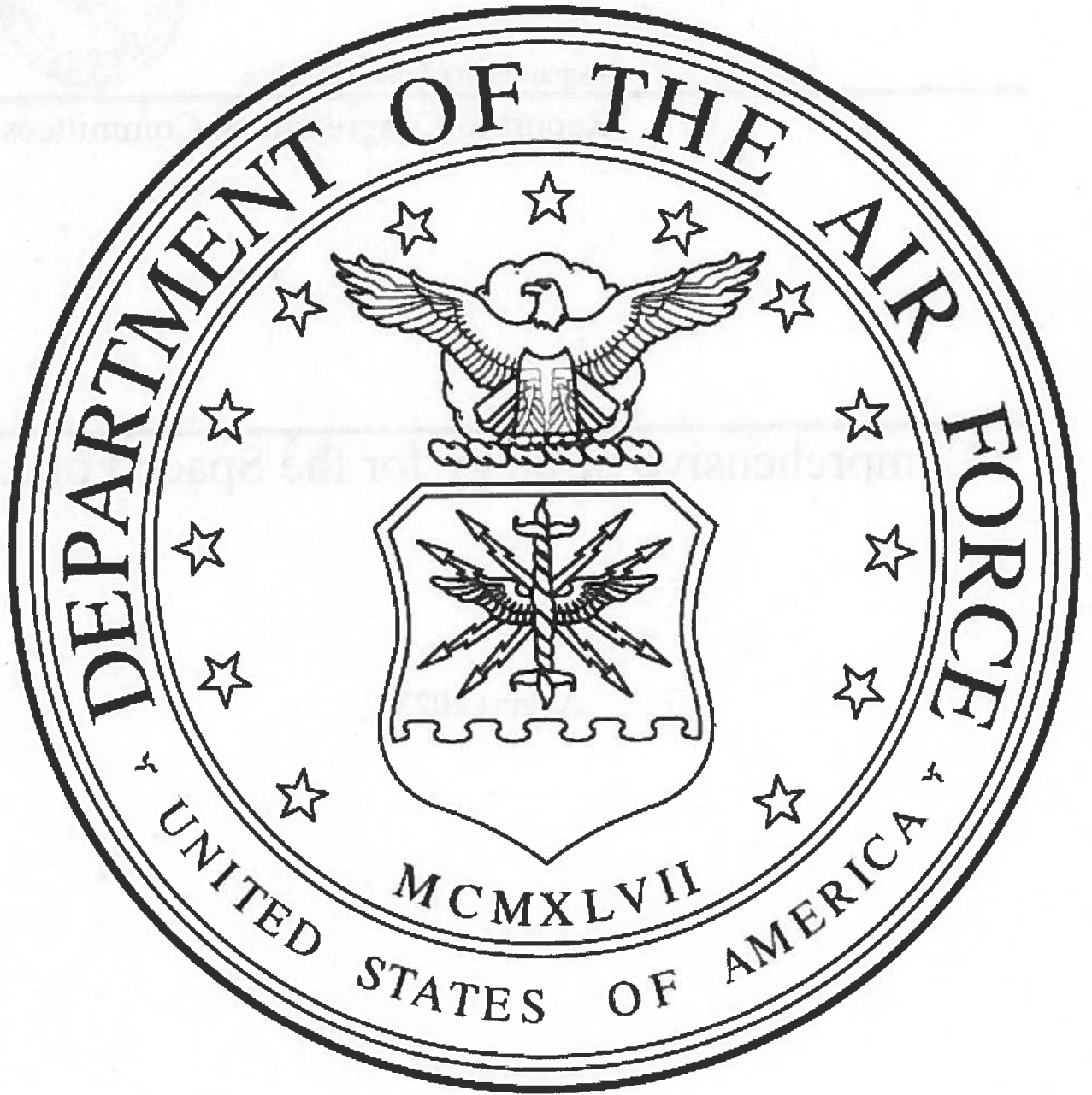
Department of the Air Force

Report to Congressional Committees

# Comprehensive Strategy for the Space Force

August 2023

The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of Defense is approximately \$102,000 for the 2023 Fiscal Year. This includes \$40,000 in expenses and \$62,000 in DoD labor.





SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

AUG 15 2023

**Congressional Report on a Comprehensive Strategy for the Space Force**

This report contains a description of the strategic objectives for organizing, training, and equipping the Space Force; a detailed plan for achieving those objectives; identification of those units or resources from other Department of Defense organizations that are necessary to achieve the objectives; and identification of the officer and enlisted end-strength requirements.

The Nation's dependency on space has only grown over time. Potential adversaries have operationalized space to enable attacks on our forces and to deny those forces the services from space that they depend on to execute global military operations. We need to protect our space capabilities and the services they provide and be prepared to defeat our adversaries' space capabilities. To this end, the Department of the Air Force is focusing on a resilient space architecture – meaning our space-based capabilities can be protected, degrade gracefully under attack, and be reconstituted in a reasonable time, if necessary. The other half of that equation is that potential adversaries have been integrating space-based capabilities with their military forces to attack us more effectively on Earth. We must be prepared to deny a potential adversary's use of space systems to monitor, track, and enable attack of U.S., Allied and partners' military forces.

The Space Force will continue to organize, train, and equip forces based on the threats and challenges outlined in the National Defense Strategy and National Military Strategy. The Department will continue to develop and field technologies and capabilities to ensure the United States, along with its Allies and partners, can defend against aggression threatening our way of life.

The Department of the Air Force appreciates Congress' continued support as the Space Force normalizes and meets today's emerging challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Kendall", is positioned above the printed name.

Frank Kendall



## Introduction

This report is provided to the congressional defense committees as directed in the Joint Explanatory Statement (JES), page 370, accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023:

### *COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR THE SPACE FORCE.*

*We recognize the need to establish a comprehensive strategy for the Space Force, and direct the Secretary of the Air Force, in consultation with the Chief of Space Operations, to submit to the congressional defense committees, not later than June 30, 2023, a report that includes:*

- (1) A description of the strategic objectives for organizing, training, and equipping the Space Force, including objectives for achieving and maintaining:
  - (a) The capability to assert a degree of control in space that permits the conduct of operations at a given time and place without prohibitive interference from terrestrial or space-based threats;*
  - (b) Global communications, command and control, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities to the combatant commands and their respective components; and*
  - (c) Space capabilities to satisfy joint requirements.**
- (2) A specific and detailed plan for achieving such objectives that includes:
  - (a) A funding plan;*
  - (b) A ground-based infrastructure plan; and*
  - (c) A space architecture plan.**
- (3) An identification of any units or resources from other Department of Defense organizations that may be necessary to achieving such objectives; and*
- (4) An identification of the officer and enlisted end-strength requirements for the Space Force to include a justification for any additional billets that may be necessary to achieving such objectives.*

*The report shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex, and not later than 14 days after the date on which the report is submitted, the Secretary and the Chief shall make the unclassified form of the report available to the public on an internet website of the Department of Defense. Furthermore, not later than 30 days after the date on which the report is submitted, the Secretary and the Chief shall provide a briefing to the congressional defense committees on the report's findings.*

## Executive Summary

The U.S. Space Force was established to organize, train and equip the space forces needed to protect U.S. interests, secure freedom of action in the space domain, and meet military objectives of the Joint Force. The Space Force is focused on meeting the needs and addressing the threats facing the force today and in the future as a critical component of the Joint Force. Meanwhile, China remains the pacing challenge and continues to move forward with aggressive modernization programs to deny our use of space in conflict. To counter these efforts and maintain a competitive advantage, the Service must accelerate the delivery of resilient space warfighting capabilities.

This report details a comprehensive strategy for the U.S. Space Force and provides a plan to execute its vision. This strategy enables the Space Force to stay ahead of growing national security challenges in space. The Space Force must be focused on enhancing combat readiness of U.S. forces, developing the Guardians that underpin the Service's readiness, and leveraging the partnerships, as with industry and allies, required for success. These concepts are not new, and the USSF has spent the three and a half years since its inception working on them. However, the Space Force can enhance and accelerate its efforts in these areas, applying lessons learned from the Service's establishment experience. There is still work to be done, and the Service will need feedback from the field to continue to mature the organization successfully.

First, this report highlights Space Force objectives for organizing, training, and equipping forces. To achieve these objectives, the USSF established three lines of effort: Field Combat-Ready Forces so that the Space Force has the personnel, training, and equipment required to prevail in a fight; Amplify the Guardian Spirit so that the Space Force attracts, develops, inspires, empowers, and retains individuals who thrive in the USSF organization and under Guardian values; and Partner to Win to strengthen relationships with the Joint Force, Allies, and partners so that the Space Force can collaborate to build enduring advantages, deter aggression, and defeat adversaries.

Second, this report details the plan for achieving USSF objectives, to include funding and architecture plans. The Space Force, along with the rest of the Services and the Joint Force, is currently postured to deter and, if required, defeat these potential threats. Maintaining this relative advantage, however, will require the Space Force to accelerate its plans by relentlessly pursuing innovative and decisive operational capabilities. This includes fielding resilient and defensible architectures, preparing Guardians to outcompete and overcome these threats, and partnering with joint, coalition, commercial, and interagency partners to maximize its combat capability.

Third, this report identifies units and resources from other DoD organizations that may be necessary to achieve Service objectives. The joint team's relationship with the Space Force must be consistent with the relationship it has with all other Services. The Space Force leads coordination with Combatant Commands to optimize Joint effectiveness and leads partner engagement to ensure complementary allied, commercial, and civil capability

development. USSF programs of record deliver Joint Warfighting capabilities, providing Combatant Commanders military capability to achieve operational objectives.

Fourth, this report identifies personnel end-strength requirements for the Space Force, validating that the projected end-strength of 8,600 uniformed personnel consists of the right mix, to include background, experience, and skills, so that the USSF can effectively execute its mission requirements. The USSF's end strength is expected to grow over the next few years as the Service continues building out the necessary force to meet National Defense Strategy objectives, integrate with the Joint Force, and fulfill operational requirements of Combatant Commanders. The end strength requirements will continue to be reviewed to ensure the Service balances risk in maintaining legacy capabilities against demands of future force requirements, while providing healthy and sustainable career progression for Guardians.

The Space Force must accelerate initiatives to build a lean, agile, and innovative Service. To do so, commanders must trust and empower their subordinates to act, pursue disciplined initiative, and ultimately, assume appropriate risk when and where required. Subordinates, in turn, must trust their leaders will follow through with empowerment, value disciplined initiative, and accept failure that can result from sensible risk-taking. It is incumbent on leaders at all levels to deliberately build this mutual trust.

Because of the complexity of the space domain with digital and technological dependencies, space operations cannot be easily separated from cyber operations, engineering, and acquisition functions. As a result, the USSF must continue to review and evaluate the career fields used to categorize the expertise of its Guardians.

The contents of this report are posted on the website: <http://www.af.mil/News>.

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Report

Space activities are essential to our way of life. They advance our understanding of the Earth, the universe, and humanity; enable U.S. national security; create good jobs and economic opportunity; enhance our health and well-being; and inspire us to pursue our dreams. Space capabilities provide critical data, products, and services that drive innovation in the United States and around the world. Access to and use of space is a vital national interest.

—*United States Space Priorities Framework, 1 December 2021*

The vision for the Space Force is centered on warfighting: the USSF must normalize its processes within the joint construct to achieve that vision. The joint team’s relationship with the Space Force must be consistent with the relationship it has with all other Services. The capabilities each Service provides are seamlessly integrated together into a synchronized unity of effort. The Space Force can be no different. The Space Force must have the right organizational structures, operational concepts, equipment, and training to seamlessly integrate into the Joint Force team. This includes ensuring the other Military Services account for critical space capabilities in their planning and that the Space Force is prepared to protect space capabilities from potential adversary attack, while also protecting the rest of the Joint Force from space-enabled attack.

***Section 1: A description of the strategic objectives for organizing, training, and equipping the Space Force***

Section 9081 of Title 10, United States Code mandates that the Space Force be organized, trained, and equipped to, “(1) provide freedom of operation for the United States in, from, and to space; (2) conduct space operations; and (3) protect the interests of the United States in space.” In considering these three functions, “provide freedom of operations” means ensuring that the United States can continue to use the space domain in pursuit of its national interests. This is a core responsibility of the Space Force that endures through peacetime, competition, crisis, and conflict. The United States must have the continuous ability to safely and securely launch and operate satellites in support of economic, military, and diplomatic interests. The Space Force provides capabilities to ensure that no one is in a position to deny the United States its access to the space domain. U.S. interests are protected by safeguarding and enhancing the ability of U.S. commercial, civil, intelligence, and military entities to safely and effectively access, maneuver within, and exploit the space domain without interference.

Second, “conduct space operations” refers to the technical specialty of the Space Force. The Service designs, builds, launches, employs, integrates, maintains, and responsibly disposes of military space capabilities. It is this responsibility that requires the USSF to present ready forces to Combatant Commanders. Combatant Commanders have the authority to execute operations in pursuit of assigned missions. For the space element of these missions, it is normally Space Force Guardians assigned to the supported or to a supporting



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Combatant Command who conduct the space operations necessary to meet the needs of the Combatant Commander.

Third, “protect the interests of the United States in space” refers to the capability development imperative of the USSF. Space Forces must be prepared to deter and defeat potential U.S. adversaries in direct support of a ‘whole-of-government’ approach to integrated deterrence.

When the Space Force was established, many of the core functions of a military branch of service did not exist. Since December 2019, Space Force members and others detailed to support the stand up designed and resourced a complete service structure, and began building training, education, personnel management, intelligence, and force design enterprises. The USSF also overhauled its acquisition structures through expanded delegation and emphasis on smaller satellites and ground systems while minimizing non-recurring engineering, codified its approach to integrated test and evaluation, and implemented its new force generation model for employed-in-place forces. As these initiatives mature, the Space Force must continuously evaluate its organizational constructs to ensure “form follows function.” To that end, three lines of effort (LOEs) for the Space Force have been established, which are:

- Field Combat-Ready Forces so that the Space Force has the personnel, training, and equipment required to prevail in a fight.
- Amplify the Guardian Spirit so that the Space Force attracts, develops, inspires, empowers, and retains individuals who thrive in the USSF organization and under its values.
- Partner to Win so that the Space Force can collaborate with mission partners to accomplish its critical set of roles and functions.

While the progress the Space Force has made over the last three and a half years is tremendous, the Service must maintain urgency and momentum. Every unit in the Space Force must pursue these LOEs with urgency to address the Service’s most urgent challenges.

### **LOE #1: Field Combat-Ready Forces**

The Space Force develops and trains Guardians, designs and acquires space systems, and provides those personnel and systems to the Joint Force. LOE #1 focuses on comprehensively fielding forces – equipment, trained personnel, expertise, and sustainment – that are prepared to conduct prompt and enduring operations against an adversary.

Space forces must be resilient, ready, and combat-credible. Each of these descriptors is important and must be clearly understood. A *resilient* force can withstand, fight through, and recover from attacks. A *ready* force has the trained personnel, equipment, and sustainment capacity to accomplish missions and tasks in a high-intensity operational environment. A *combat-credible* force has demonstrated the ability to conduct offensive and

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defensive operations against an adversary. All three are important, and the USSF must comprehensively account for each attribute in its force design, force development, and force employment activities.

This LOE has broad implications for the Space Force, to include:

- A pivot to resiliency for on-orbit constellations, ground stations, networks, data, mission critical support facilities, and the integration of the Joint Function, “Information,” to protect and support space operations’ information environment.
- “Fully burdened” force design and resourcing recommendations to incorporate crew force requirements, command and control, intelligence, networks, cyber defense, test and training infrastructure, sustainment, and facilities.
- Range capacity and representative training devices capable of preparing Guardians to engage a thinking adversary in a realistic threat environment.
- Operational concepts and tactics developed, assessed, and enhanced through a Service-wide campaign of continuous learning, led by the units entrusted with its systems.
- Responsive sustainment that is tightly integrated between capability development and operations.

These initiatives under LOE #1 require deliberate updates to doctrine and operational concepts, organizational constructs, training, material acquisition, leadership education, personnel structures, facilities, and policies (DOTMLPF-P). Ultimately, the Space Force must field combat-ready forces prepared to outcompete rivals, deter aggressors, and defeat enemies.

### **LOE #2: Amplify the Guardian Spirit**

The health and vitality of the USSF depends on its ability to attract, develop, inspire, empower, and retain Service members and civilians who exhibit the Guardian Spirit. This LOE focuses on unleashing the creativity, innovation, determination, and dedication of every Guardian. The Guardian Spirit is a collective representation of what it means to be a member of the Space Force. It describes the most positive attributes of the USSF workforce and distinguishes us as a separate Service. Like all ideals, the Guardian Spirit is easy to recognize yet difficult to explicitly define. At a minimum, those who exhibit the Guardian Spirit share three core traits, which the Service expands upon in the *Guardian Spirit* handbook.

- *Principled Public Servant*. Members of the profession of arms who embody the values of character, connection, commitment, and courage. Selfless public service is the foundation of the USSF organization and the source of the trust the American people place in the U.S. military.

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- *Space-minded Warfighter*. Individuals who are deeply committed to defending the nation, protecting its interests, and defeating its enemies. They have a deep understanding of space operations and are experts in fielding and employing space capabilities against a thinking adversary.
- *Bold and Collaborative Problem Solver*. Guardians who engage with, analyze, and debate new ideas and perpetually challenge the status quo. When presented with a problem, they have the courage and persistence to experiment, fail, learn, adapt, and innovate. They are primed to seize and exploit the initiative and comfortably empowering subordinates to act.

Amplifying the Guardian Spirit starts with taking care of Guardians. The USSF will continuously enhance its military and civilian personnel management processes, endeavoring to ensure they are transparent, predictable, and professional. Leadership teams at every level must showcase and reward the Guardian Spirit. To do this, the USSF will empower Guardians through consistent implementation of mission command and establish new avenues for Guardians to share their challenges and innovations. These expectations derive from one core principle: Guardian talent and expertise is the Space Force's most important operational advantage.

### **LOE #3: Partner to Win**

Partnering is key to USSF readiness and ultimately, accomplishing Space Force roles and missions. Indeed, spacepower is a collaborative endeavor. Even with superlative talent and exceptional capabilities, the Space Force will not succeed without robust joint, commercial, coalition, international, interagency, and academic partnerships.

Partnerships are part of the USSF core structure as a Service. For example, the Space Force relies on the Air Force for many important infrastructure and sustainment functions – security forces, civil engineers, logisticians, legal, public affairs, and medical professionals to name a few. Additionally, the Space Force details over seven percent of its military Service members to the National Reconnaissance Office. These attributes make us unique in the DoD.

Partnerships should also act as critical force multipliers and expand USSF competitive advantage. They are more than deconfliction, coordination, or synchronization mechanisms. The USSF must continue to cultivate partnerships that build enduring operational advantages. This means building partnerships that expand the capacity, capability, and resiliency of USSF space forces.

To do this, the Space Force will eliminate barriers to collaboration. The Service can address traditional barriers like over-classification and incompatible systems through policy. But the partnerships the Space Force seeks cannot be built on policy alone. The best way to build partnerships is through direct collaboration that is mutually beneficial. The USSF is committed to placing Guardians in positions where they can strengthen critical partnerships. Foreign exchanges, deployments to industry, university partnerships, reverse industry days, security cooperation initiatives, and shared professional military education opportunities are

examples of the initiatives the USSF will pursue under this LOE. Partnering is not transactional. It is a deeper relationship built on trust and mutual benefit that ensures cooperation will continue even under geopolitical, financial, and adversarial stress.

***Part A: The capability to assert a degree of control in space that permits the conduct of operations at a given time and place without prohibitive interference from terrestrial or space-based threats***

The entire Joint Force is designed and postured around the assumption that space capabilities will always be readily available. Consequently, both China and Russia are making significant investments to advance their capability and capacity to counter U.S. space-based advantages. It has been assessed that both countries will (1) continue to invest in counterspace systems that threaten U.S. freedom to operate in space; (2) expand their use of space to enable their broader military forces in other domains; and (3) enhance the use of space-based targeting to threaten U.S. forces on land, air, and sea. The pace at which they are doing so is a concern.

The Space Force is organized, trained, and equipped to provide freedom of operation for the United States in, from and to space; conduct space operations; and protect the interests of the United States in space. In short, the USSF must provide trained personnel and capabilities to counter the aims of potential adversaries in denying U.S. space advantages.

For additional information, see the Classified Annex.

***Part B: Global communications, command and control, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities to the combatant commands and their respective components***

As a Service Force Provider, the USSF's number one customer is United States Space Command (USSPACECOM). Most space operations are conducted at a global enterprise level by USSPACECOM and therefore, the vast majority of USSF capabilities are appropriately presented to USSPACECOM. However, other Combatant Commands have requirements for space expertise, activities, and space capabilities. These requirements include planning and exercise integration expertise, regional space activities like security cooperation activities with allies and partner nations and establishment of networks and procedures to disseminate missile warning data to all forces in the theater regardless of dynamically shifting bases or disadvantaged communications positions in the theater. Regional space capabilities like counter-SATCOM capabilities to support personnel recovery or force protection of maneuver elements may also be requested in theater. The USSF will be postured to provide command and control structures and ready forces to meet these requirements as well.

For additional information, see the Classified Annex.

***Part C: Space capabilities to satisfy joint requirements***

The Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) designated the Chief of Space Operations (CSO) the Force Design Architect for Space Systems of the Armed Forces. The CSO, under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of the Air Force, is responsible for presenting coordinated recommendations to the SECDEF regarding space-mission force design options to satisfy the requirements of the Joint Force and the Armed Forces. The Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) has designated the USSF as the integrator for DoD's Joint Space Requirements. The Force Design Architect and Joint Integrator now can bring the entire joint community together to develop cogent space requirements. Additionally, with this responsibility, the Space Force can collect, organize and adjudicate these requirements and provide endorsements and recommendations that help accelerate the JROC's capabilities development processes.

Space capabilities must be designed and fielded as part of a system-of-systems to optimize mission performance, reduce unnecessary redundancies, and maximize resource efficiency. The USSF works with the other Services and Combatant Commands to understand their specific needs for space capabilities and to integrate those needs into the joint requirements process.

The Space Force must focus on enabling speed and flexibility when providing inputs to the acquisition system and the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Space Acquisition and Integration (SAF/SQ). Ensuring that the USSF develops accurate and timely requirements is vital to kickstart the process of delivering capabilities when needed. The USSF must accelerate space acquisition to outpace potential U.S. adversaries and maintain U.S. technological advantage.

For additional information, see the Classified Annex.

***Section 2: A specific and detailed plan for achieving such objectives***

The most significant challenge for the USSF is staying ahead of strategic competitors' growing arsenal of space and counterspace weapons. Guardians, along with the rest of the Services and Joint Force, are currently postured to deter and, if required, defeat these potential threats. Maintaining this relative advantage, however, will require the Space Force to outpace the accelerating threat trajectory by relentlessly pursuing innovative and decisive operational capabilities. This includes fielding resilient and defendable architectures, preparing Guardians to outcompete and overcome these threats, and partnering with joint, coalition, commercial, and interagency partners to maximize U.S. combat capability.

For additional information, see the Classified Annex.

***Part A: A funding plan***

Figure 1 below, the USSF Funding plan, is broken down by mission area over the Future Years Defense Program (FY24-FY28).

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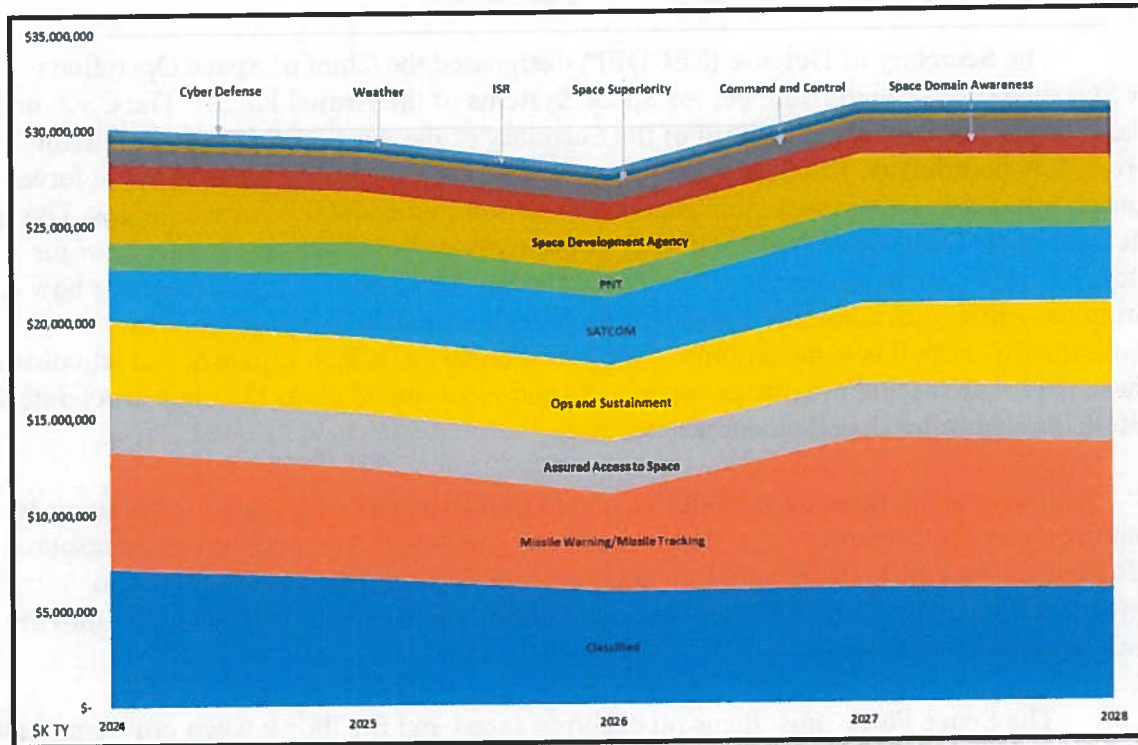


Figure 1. USSF Funding Plan

### *Part B: A ground-based infrastructure plan*

The space domain is the USSF's focus, but the Service cannot be successful without the integration of cyber capabilities and cyber mission assurance throughout all U.S. ground, link, and space systems. The USSF must understand the domains and needs of multiple Service users including SATCOM receivers on the ground, at sea or in the air, worldwide GPS receivers in all domains, systems to broadcast and report global and theater missile warning, and Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2) networks in all domains. The Space Force will specifically integrate into the JADC2 concepts because the C2 capabilities will require worldwide distribution of data, shared situational awareness, sensor data on tactical timelines and global communication with decentralized units. The Space Force's unique capabilities will be crucial features that enable the Joint Force to realize the JADC2 vision.

It is important that the USSF has synchronization between satellite and ground systems to ensure delivery of a comprehensive operational capability that integrates effectively to accept, discern, and fuse data from national, defense, and commercial sources and share it across multiple security boundaries. The USSF works closely with the Space Acquisition Executive and broader acquisition community to address challenges and deliver a commanding, processing, and distribution network architecture synchronized with space and ground systems.

***Part C: A space architecture plan***

Space capabilities must be designed and fielded as part of a system-of-systems to optimize mission performance, reduce unnecessary redundancies, and maximize resource efficiency. The CSO as the Integrator for DoD's Joint Space Requirements works with the other Services and Combatant Commands to understand their needs for space capabilities. This informs what the CSO as the Force Design Architect recommends for force designs of DoD space systems that are affordable, meet essential user needs, and outpace threats. One of the first examples of the Force Design Architect and the Joint Integrator role in action was the work done to redesign the Missile Warning/Missile Tracking (MW/MT) Architecture. In collaboration with key stakeholders and considering emerging threat assessments, rigorous analysis and wargaming was used to define a more resilient, more capable, and more defensible MW/MT architecture. The requirements for the systems ensured that key customers' needs were accounted for. The net result was a well-coordinated and synchronized set of architecture requirements that accelerated the USSF path to fielding the enhanced capability.

For additional information, including the Space Warfighting Analysis Center's multi-year Force Design plan, see the Classified Annex.

***Section 3: An identification of any units or resources from other Department of Defense organizations that may be necessary to achieving such objectives***

The Space Force works through the Space Acquisition Council and other venues across the DoD to unify and harmonize efforts. The USSF prepares implementation plans to unify disparate acquisition and sustainment authorities for space systems currently distributed across the National Reconnaissance Office, Missile Defense Agency, Army, Navy, and several Office of the Secretary of Defense elements.

The Strategy and Resources Office leads coordination with Combatant Commands to ensure the USSF Program Objective Memorandum optimizes Joint effectiveness and lead partner engagement to ensure complementary allied, commercial, and civil capability development. USSF programs of record deliver Joint Warfighting capabilities, providing Combatant Commanders the military capability needed to achieve operational objectives. The USSF enables Combatant Commanders to protect and defend the people and homeland of the United States and U.S. national interests.

***Section 4: An identification of the officer and enlisted end-strength requirements for the Space Force to include a justification for any additional billets that may be necessary to achieving such objectives***

The Space Force is focused on validating that a projected end-strength of 8,600 uniformed personnel, along with approximately 5,000 civilians, consists of the right mix, to include background, experience, and skills, so that the Service can effectively execute its mission requirements. The end strength requirements will continue to be reviewed to ensure that the Service continues to balance risk in maintaining legacy capabilities against demands

of future force requirements, as well as provide for healthy and sustainable career progression for USSF Guardians.

The USSF will evaluate personnel policies and talent management processes through a force readiness lens, and the Service will focus on implementing the policies and processes that optimize the Service's readiness in the most expeditious manner.

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## Conclusion

The Space Force must provide the needed support to our Combatant Commands to deter threats to U.S. space capabilities and interests, along with promoting responsible behaviors in space. The Space Force will not succeed if it assumes its previous ways will be effective in the emerging security environment. The Space Force must be innovative in everything it does from recruiting and retaining its talented Guardians, to acquiring space capabilities, and training for the contested space domain. To meet its objectives and keep evolving, the USSF will utilize three LOEs: Field Combat-Ready Forces, Amplify the Guardian Spirit, and Partner to Win.



# Comprehensive Strategy for the Space Force

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