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## **THE UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE IN THE AMERICAN SECURITY STRATEGY**

### **Introduction**

There is a widespread notion among the American politicians and within the military that the New Space Race is already underway. According to this line of thinking, some countries, most notably China and Russia, challenge the United States dominant position in the Earth's orbit. Until recently, this position has given the United States unique capabilities which greatly facilitated not only the security of the United States but also contributed to the development of numerous civilian applications. These applications, in turn, have greatly benefited the U.S. economy and have proven extremely useful in the everyday life of the American citizenry. However, the narrative of the New Space Race on-the-move holds, the powerful contenders try to deprive the United States of its position in space and deny benefits America reaps from the space exploration. That is why it is widely implicated that the United States must not only take part in this race, but an imperative to win it is almost existentially important. Although some scholars do not agree with that notion whatsoever<sup>1</sup>, this narrative is gradually more and more embedded in the American public discourse.

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<sup>1</sup> B. Charlton, *The myth of the "new space race"*, "The Space Review", 25.11.2019, <https://www.thespacereview.com/article/3838/1> [accessed: 26.11.2019].

An essential part of the argument mentioned above is the one about the security of the American space-related assets. It is often being repeated that Russia, China, and other unfriendly nations are developing a wide range of counter-space systems that are able to degrade the U.S. capabilities in space. Therefore, many politicians claim that the outer space has already been transformed into the warfighting domain<sup>2</sup> and the United States has to admit it and act accordingly. Among the measures implemented to address this problem, the separate service has recently been created within the U.S. military, the United States Space Force (USSF). It is tasked to combine space-related capabilities to form a unified and so more effective service than the existing ones scattered across the armed forces.

This article depicts and assesses the primary rationale behind the decision to create USSF, against the broad background of the United States security strategy with particular attention to the role of outer space in it. We will, therefore, firstly describe in brief the role of outer space in the security strategy of the United States. Secondly, we will present the current state and mission of the U.S. Space Force and its perspectives. And finally, we will address some controversies related to the creation of the new military branch.

### **Outer Space in the Security Strategy of the United States<sup>3</sup>**

The United States is continuously pursuing the global strategy of active political engagement, and it means that all of the world's regions and the global domains are within the sphere of the American interest. The general goal of this engagement is to maintain worldwide political influence to promote broadly understood economic interest of the United States. The main instruments the United States uses to perform various global and regional policies are:

- economic might which is often utilized as a tool to maintain political influence and thus to solidify long-term economic co-operation;
- so-called soft-power what means the power of attraction of the American economic and social model which makes countries and regions willingly align with the U.S. interest for their benefit, and
- military strength, which is a vital tool aimed at securing the U.S. positions in the world against possible opposition which would try to use military coercion against the American interests.

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<sup>2</sup> See for example: C.T. Lopez, *Shanahan: Space No Longer Peaceful*, U.S. Department of Defense, 9.04.2019, <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1810085/shanahan-space-no-longer-peaceful> [accessed: 17.05.2020].

<sup>3</sup> For further reference see on this issue see: M. Czajkowski, *Przestrzeń kosmiczna w strategii bezpieczeństwa narodowego USA [Outer Space in the National Security Strategy of the USA]*, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2020.

From our point of view, the last category is the most important, as we analyze the security strategy of the United States. The U.S. military performs various duties and fulfils many tasks not only with regard to classic defensive functions of armed forces. Due to the geographical extent of American influence and interests, the military must perform a wide range of tasks, which include:

- deterrence of potential aggression against the U.S. territory and the American interests abroad; this is a classic function of the armed forces but significantly broadened, as it covers many regions and all of the global commons;
- defending against the aggression against the U.S. soil and overseas interests of the United States, what means executing combat missions whenever and wherever it is necessary due to character of the threat; again, it is a classic function of the military but significantly expanded because of the global reach of the American influence and interests;
- extended deterrence, what means deterring potential offenders from aggression against the U.S. allies and partners and defending them should deterrence fail; it is a necessary form of military activity, as the United States relies on the system of alliances and partnerships to maintain its global influence; this mission includes constant military co-operation and stationing of the American troops abroad on a permanent basis;
- support of the current foreign policy by manifestations of the political will, as armed forces stationed in various countries or regions are an indication of Washington’s intent and of the significance of certain areas from the point of view of the United States interests; one of the most distinctive features of the U.S. armed forces, which is specifically important for this task is the mobility of combat units, especially sea- and air-borne, which are frequently used components of the political pressure exerted to achieve current goals<sup>4</sup>; the military is, therefore, an essential political argument, if necessary it even becomes the tool of coercion, as the U.S. is continuously ready to use the military force, and
- conducting policing, humanitarian and other non-combat actions; these missions include managing regions and global commons for the sake of stability, and it also contributes to the enhancement of the American soft-power.

The abundance of the U.S. military installations of various kind in the world is, therefore, one of the essential measures of the American global engagement, as the military is an indispensable instrument of Washington’s activities in various regions of the world and globally. These installations, located in countries and territories on every continent, contain vast quantities of stored war

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<sup>4</sup> See representative examples: J. Masters, *Sea Power: The U.S. Navy and Foreign Policy*, Council on Foreign Relations, 19.08.2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/sea-power-us-navy-and-foreign-policy> [accessed: 20.08.2019].

material, large numbers of personnel, and are equipped with a variety of weapons systems, including tactical nuclear weapons. The military units stationed abroad may, therefore, sustain long military campaigns thanks to this infrastructure and the capability to perform rapid build-up of forces in certain areas should the need arise. This attitude is also reflected in the declared security doctrine of the United States, as it strongly underlines the notion of peace through strength.<sup>5</sup>

The fundamental condition for the realization of the tasks mentioned above is the common perception which persists in the world that the American military posture is credible. In practical terms, it means that the U.S. must maintain the capabilities of their forces which ensure overwhelming advantage over any possible opponent. But this does not imply a numerical advantage in planes, ships or personnel, because due to the global nature of the American engagement, it would be an unbearable burden for the economy and society. The advantage stemming from the possession of a nuclear arsenal cannot be counted as well. Weapons of mass destruction are not an instrument of everyday foreign policy; they pose a deterrent to the existential threats but are not a tool to deal with day-to-day local tasks.

The solution is, of course, a technological advantage compounded with ability to redeploy large forces across the world rapidly. These traits of the American military allow it to fulfil various tasks throughout the globe simultaneously, maintaining the force levels acceptable from the economic point of view. Thanks to the technological advantage and capability to deploy forces quickly to achieve a local concentration of combat units, the U.S. is able to conduct military campaigns with very limited losses. The latter is one of the keys to understanding the American military posture. It not only means that losing soldiers as a result of enemy action is politically problematic at home. Equally important is, again, the economic factor. Significant and frequent damages to installations and losses of the equipment would undermine economic foundations of the U.S. military as an instrument of the otherwise not militarized country. It means that the military expenditures cannot exceed the “reasonable” level of several per cent of the GDP.

One of the most important aspects of the American technological advantage in the military sphere is that the U.S. forces wield several vital “force multipliers”. These are operational concepts, forms of organization, and technologies which do not bring direct combat advantages but greatly enhance the effectiveness of units in the field. This way, an outcome of their operation is somewhat multiplied, what means that combat units may be several times more effective than similar ones without the “multipliers”. The most crucial force multipliers in the U.S. military are logistics, communications, positioning and intelligence gathering. These capabilities, when properly integrated, allow the relatively small

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<sup>5</sup> *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, The White House, Washington D.C., December 2017, s. 4, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf> [accessed: 31.07.2018].

American forces to execute worldwide combat and non-combat missions with great success and effectiveness, and with minimal losses.

What combines all those force multipliers is that they are much depended on space applications, what makes space systems some of the most valuable assets as far as the American military advantage is concerned. Thus, the satellite systems and their unhampered use are crucial for the whole American security strategy. The same refers to the foreign policy, as it relies to a great extent on the unmatched military might and freedom to use it everywhere and anytime.

Space systems are force multipliers, because they enhance capabilities of armed forces and other institutions, allowing them to perform their duties much better. But the use of space systems not only directly enhances combat effectiveness of the military units, but it also has an important political dimension. Firstly, by augmenting the capabilities of the armed forces which are also a political instrument, what we know already. And secondly, by enhancing the intelligence and communication capabilities which are often used for political purpose. Generally speaking, there are two essential features of the space systems as a force multiplier, which form its two main dimensions.

The first dimension, clearly visible and often acknowledged, means a considerable enhancement of the effectiveness of many military activities thanks to the support of the space systems. The missions performed within the realm of the security and outside it, are simply much more effective with space applications than without them. Space communications allow overcoming the geographical constraints that classic ground systems suffer and the limitations imposed by the characteristics of the atmosphere. Furthermore, Satellite positioning allows ships, planes, vehicles, individuals to obtain quick fix of their position – this refers to guided munitions as well. And finally, space-borne surveillance and intelligence assets bypass natural geographical limitations and are not inhibited by state borders what multiply related capabilities.

In short, satellite technology is one of the main aspects of technological advantage that the United States enjoy over the world within the realm of security, what reflects on the effectiveness of foreign policy as well. This advantage manifests in multiple patterns related to the details of a particular mission, be it the region where it is executed or the objective of the mission. For example, the Russian Federation has built thousands of GPS jamming stations on its territory and excels with spoofing the positioning signals.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, every military action with the use of satellite navigation systems would be more difficult against that country against the other, less advanced. The same refers to satellite surveillance against international actors who possess sophisticated means of concealing and hiding of valuable objects. By the way, at this point we can see a significant

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<sup>6</sup> See for example: E. Groll, *Russia Is Tricking GPS to Protect Putin*, “Foreign Policy”, 3.04.2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/04/03/russia-is-tricking-gps-to-protect-putin> [accessed: 10.09.2019].

feature of space applications: many of their key parameters and modes of operation are well known to the adversaries who may take various actions to negate or limit space systems' effectiveness.

The second dimension in which space-borne capabilities show their value as a force multiplier is the economic sphere. It means that the cost of the particular mission, be it the destruction of a single target or delivery of a bit of information, is lower due to the precision that space applications add to every activity. This aspect may be less visible, but still, it is crucial, as the cost of the overall American presence in the world must be kept within bearable limits. Otherwise, the United States could suffer from the economic burden of its global policies, what in turn would limit the scope of the engagement, thus diminishing the profits the U.S. gains from its world activity. An excellent example of how this advantage worked is the Persian Gulf War in 1991. The U.S. and its allies' forces effectively annihilated the huge Iraqi army with the use of much smaller, but highly capable forces. Their effective operations were enhanced, among the others, by space systems, which allowed precise strike, effective navigation on the desert and unhampered tactical communication, not to mention reconnaissance and surveillance performed by imaging and signals intelligence satellites. Thanks to these capabilities, the victory against Iraq was achieved without high additional costs of the probably much longer campaign if it was conducted without them.

Summarizing to this point, we have to reiterate that space systems as a force multiplier or as force multipliers are crucial for the successful execution of the American military strategy. This efficiency, in turn, reflects significantly on the effectiveness of the overall foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, we can conclude that space applications form the backbone of the global reach of the U.S. armed forces. They also, to a great extent, facilitate the sustainable nature of the American engagement, as they contribute to the general military advantage of the United States. Without these systems operating smoothly and without interruptions, the U.S. global posture would be significantly diminished.

This brings us to the vital problem, already signalled above that this advantage is increasingly contested. Other countries build their own space systems which emulate the American ones, and they are also designing and deploying the means to negate the U.S. space capabilities. It is therefore often argued that the American space "hegemony" is drawing to its end. The United States understands that, and many politicians and influential think-tanks repeatedly issue stern warnings that the American advantage is actually diminishing.<sup>7</sup> One of the clear signs of the recognition of this fact is that the U.S. forces conduct extensive exercises

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<sup>7</sup> See for example: G. Autry, S. Kwast, *America Is Losing the Second Space Race to China*, "Foreign Policy", 22.08.2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/08/22/america-is-losing-the-second-space-race-to-china/> [accessed: 19.05.2020].

in the environment in which at least some of satellite capabilities are negated, even though it brings significant disturbances of the civil aviation.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, in the United States, there is a multitude of activities, plans and strategies regarding enhancement of the positions in outer space. There are technology development programs, proposed changes in doctrine and training and organizational adjustments. One of these measures, which supposedly possess great potential, is the establishment of the United States Space Force.

## Organization and Mission of the U.S. Space Force

The effort to establish new patterns of organizing the security-related space activities started formally in March 2018, when President Donald J. Trump officially mentioned for the first time the intent to establish the United States Space Force (USSF) as a separate branch of the military.<sup>9</sup> However, the creation of the new military service is a prerogative of the Congress, so, before the Space Force has been created, some other organizational effort was set in motion in order to prepare the new institutions.

In September 2018 *Final Report on Organizational and Management Structure for the National Security Space Components of the Department of Defense*<sup>10</sup> was directed by Department of Defense (DoD) to the U.S. Congress. This document was intended to lay out a groundwork for the effort needed to establish the new branch of armed forces. Among the others, it envisioned the formation of several organizations, like Space Command, Space Operations Force and Space Development Agency. On the day of publication of this report, President Trump signed the directive which ordered the DoD to create these components within existing structures what did not require an authorization from the Congress.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> B. Carey, *FAA Mulls Recommendations For Planned GPS Interference*, Aviation Week Network, 1.08.2018. <http://aviationweek.com/commercial-aviation/faa-mulls-recommendations-planned-gps-interference> [accessed: 8.08.2018].

<sup>9</sup> K. Johnson, *Bad Idea: Conflating the Space Force with NASA*, CSIS, 21.12.2018, <https://defense360.csis.org/bad-idea-conflating-the-space-force-with-nasa> [accessed: 12.04.2020].

<sup>10</sup> *Final Report on Organizational and Management Structure for the National Security Space Components of the Department of Defense*, Report to Congressional Defense Committees, U.S. Department of Defense, 9.08.2018, <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Aug/09/2001952764/-1/-1/1/ORGANIZATIONAL-MANAGEMENT-STRUCTURE-DOD-NATIONAL-SECURITY-SPACE-COMPONENTS.PDF> [accessed: 14.08.2018].

<sup>11</sup> *President Donald J. Trump is Building the United States Space Force for a 21st Century Military*, The White House, 9.08.2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-building-united-states-space-force-21st-century-military/> [accessed: 14.08.2018].

With the compliance with this decision the unified combatant command, the U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM) was established in August 2019<sup>12</sup>, with the United States Air Force (USAF) general (four-star) John W. Raymond as the commanding officer (CO). This organization is a so-called force user, what means it is the commanding structure responsible for planning and conducting operations in the space domain. It does not include combat units or space systems, but it is tasked with coordinating operations with the use of systems and units while conducting space activities. Space assets necessary for the operations controlled by USSPACECOM are provided by other organizations which belong to military branches of the U.S. armed forces. This is how the U.S. forces are, with some exemptions, organized. The branches of military provide the training and sustainment of the units which are assigned to combatant commands for the purpose of individual operations.

The second of the new organizations designed to refurbish and augment national security-related space effort is the Space Development Agency (SDA), established in March 2019 within the Department of Defence.<sup>13</sup> According to the initially stated intentions it was supposed to integrate all the research & development effort related to military space activities. However, it has not happened to date, since many of the development programmes referring to the new space applications have remained in other branches and organizations.<sup>14</sup> However, despite initial doubts<sup>15</sup>, the SDA is currently gaining traction, as the organization is expected to launch its first experimental satellite constellation in 2022. The novel system is supposed to be built very quickly and under entirely new operational and organizational logic to bring unique capabilities for defence purposes.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Text of a Memorandum from the President to the Secretary of Defense Regarding the Establishment of the United States Space Command*, The White House, 18.12.2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/text-memorandum-president-secretary-defense-regarding-establishment-united-states-space-command/> [accessed: 24.07.2019].

<sup>13</sup> A. Mehta, V. Insinna, *Pentagon officially stands up Space Development Agency, names first director*, “Defense News”, 13.03.2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/space/2019/03/13/pentagon-officially-stands-up-space-development-agency-names-first-director/> [accessed: 15.03.2019].

<sup>14</sup> N. Strout, *Is the Space Development Agency here to stay?*, C4ISRnet, 1.08.2019, <https://www.c4isrnet.com/battlefield-tech/space/2019/08/01/is-the-space-development-agency-here-to-stay/> [accessed: 3.08.2019].

<sup>15</sup> See for example: V. Insinna, *Two lawmakers raise alarms about new Space Development Agency*, “Defense News”, 17.04.2019, [https://www.defensenews.com/space/2019/04/17/two-lawmakers-raise-alarms-about-new-space-development-agency/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Space%2004.17.19&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20Space%20Report](https://www.defensenews.com/space/2019/04/17/two-lawmakers-raise-alarms-about-new-space-development-agency/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Space%2004.17.19&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20Space%20Report) [accessed: 19.04.2019].

<sup>16</sup> N. Strout, *One military space agency's plan for 1,000 new satellites by 2026*, C4ISRNet, 21.01.2020, [https://www.c4isrnet.com/battlefield-tech/space/2020/01/21/one-military-space-agencys-plan-for-1000-new-satellites-by-2026/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Space%2001.22.19&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20Space%20Report](https://www.c4isrnet.com/battlefield-tech/space/2020/01/21/one-military-space-agencys-plan-for-1000-new-satellites-by-2026/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Space%2001.22.19&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20Space%20Report) [accessed: 22.01.2020].



However, it is not exactly clear if the SDA will retain its separate status after it is integrated into U.S. Space Force what is currently scheduled for October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.<sup>17</sup>

The final process of establishing of the USSF was enacted by the presidential Space Policy Directive 4, on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019.<sup>18</sup> Following substantial preparatory effort, on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the United States Congress has adopted the National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA) for the FY 2020, which enabled the creation of the United States Space Force as a separate branch of the American military, located within the Department of the Air Force. However, no new billets were allowed for the new service<sup>19</sup>, as it was supposed to be formed of the units already existing within the other branches of the military. In fact, whole the Air Force Space Command, recently created within the USAF, has been redesignated and became the U.S. Space Force. On December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the NDAA came into force with the presidential signature, and this date is considered as the day of birth of the novel service, which was given 18 months to achieve full operational capability. However, it does not mean that the units assigned to the USSF are not functional – since they have been transferred from the other services, they maintain full operational capabilities.

The commanding officer of the USSF is titled the Chief of Space Operations (CSO), and he or she is one of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This post has been assigned to the U.S. Space Command CO, general Raymond, who has since that moment held these two positions. It is worth to notice that this solution links a unified combatant command (USSPACECOM) with a military branch (USSF) closer than it is in the case of other services and commands, save the U.S. Special Operations Command which is simultaneously a “force trainer”, “force provider” and force user.

The U.S. Space Force is composed of two commands, Space Operations Command and Space and Missile Systems Center.

Space Operations Command (SpOC), previously 14<sup>th</sup> Air Force within the U.S. Air Force Space Command, is responsible for the organization, training, equipping, command & control, and employment of space systems. It is, therefore, a force provider and force trainer, particularly for the U.S. Space Command,

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<sup>17</sup> V. Insinna, *Space Development Agency on track to become part of Space Force in 2022*, director says, “Defense News”, 21.01.2020, [https://www.defensenews.com/space/2020/01/21/space-development-agency-on-track-to-become-part-of-space-force-in-2022-director-says/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Space%2001.22.19&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20Space%20Report](https://www.defensenews.com/space/2020/01/21/space-development-agency-on-track-to-become-part-of-space-force-in-2022-director-says/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Space%2001.22.19&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20Space%20Report) [accessed: 22.01.2020].

<sup>18</sup> *Text of Space Policy Directive-4: Establishment of the United States Space Force*, The White House, 19.02.2019, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/text-space-policy-directive-4-establishment-united-states-space-force/> [accessed: 24.07.2019].

<sup>19</sup> J. Gould, *Congress adopts defense bill that creates Space Force*, “Defense News”, 17.12.2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2019/12/17/congress-adopts-defense-bill-that-creates-space-force/> [accessed: 3.04.2020].

which, let us reiterate, is a force user. SpOC delivers a wide range of services to combatant commanders, like ground-based early warning (21<sup>st</sup> Space Wing), space launch operations (30<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> Space Wings), control of satellite systems (50<sup>th</sup> Space Wing), space-based early warning (460<sup>th</sup> Space Wing), and operational control (614<sup>th</sup> Air Operations Center). SpOC also provides a headquarters for the core USSPACECOM subordinate, the Combined Force Space Component Command (CFCSS), which executes tactical control of the U.S.-led multinational space operations.

The second of the USSF commands, the Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC) is, according to its own declarations,

[...] the center of technical excellence for developing, acquiring, fielding and sustaining military space systems. SMC's mission is to deliver resilient and affordable space capabilities [...] responsible for on-orbit check-out, testing, sustainment and maintenance of military satellite constellations and other Department of Defense space systems.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the SMC activities range from managing the GPS, to military communications satellite constellations, to meteorological, and infrared observation systems to space launch systems and space situational awareness capabilities. The SMC consists of several directorates<sup>21</sup> which perform its core duties and is hosted by 61<sup>st</sup> Air Base Group, the unit which operates Los Angeles Air Base where SMC is located.

The FY 2021 budget request<sup>22</sup> for the U.S. Space Force provides that it should be funded with over 15 billion USD, transferred from the U.S. Air Force, for operations, maintenance, R&D, test, evaluations, etc., plus almost 10 billion USD of personnel costs. Additionally, roughly 0.5 billion is drafted for the establishment and maintenance of the USSF infrastructure consisting of a headquarters and field centres. An essential feature of the Space Force is that it has been given strong independent acquisition powers. By October 1<sup>st</sup> 2022, the recently created post, the assistant secretary of the Air Force for space acquisition and integration (ASAF/SP) will become service acquisition executive (SAE).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles Air Force Base, 2.07.2018, <https://www.losangeles.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Article/343702/space-and-missile-systems-center/> [accessed: 4.04.2020].

<sup>21</sup> For more information see: Units, Los Angeles Air Force Base, <https://www.losangeles.af.mil/Units/> [accessed: 4.04.2020].

<sup>22</sup> All the following numbers according to: *Defense Budget Overview; Irreversible Implementation of the National Defense Strategy*, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, February 2020 (revised 13.05.2020), [https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2021/fy2021\\_Budget\\_Request\\_Overview\\_Book.pdf](https://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2021/fy2021_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf) [accessed: 3.04.2020].

<sup>23</sup> E. Lofgren, *Will the Space Force control its own destiny?*, "Defence News", 26.12.2019, [https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2019/12/26/will-the-space-force-control-its-own-destiny/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Space%2001.08.19&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20Space%20Report](https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2019/12/26/will-the-space-force-control-its-own-destiny/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Space%2001.08.19&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20Space%20Report) [accessed: 12.04.2020].

This way there will be two separate SAEs within the Department of the Air Force, one for the Air Force, another for the Space Force. Note, that the Department of the Navy has at its disposal only one SAE who serves both the Navy and the Marines. These institutional arrangements give the USSF very good prospect for rapid development.

At present, there are 16 000 people assigned to the U.S. Space Force, who was transferred there with the Air Force Space Operations Command.<sup>24</sup> In the future, more servicemen and civilians would follow with the reassignment of the next space-related units from other services. But, as we have already mentioned, the current legislation does not allow USSF to hire new people, as no new billets were created for the new service. It is because Congress does not want to witness a steep rise in military spending due to the creation of the new branch of military.<sup>25</sup>

The general idea which led to the establishment of the U.S. Space Force was to combine space assets, until now under the control of several branches of the military, into one unified service. It is often argued that this transformation would facilitate more effective use of existing resources and capabilities, better contingency planning, and more efficient training. Furthermore, the holistic perspective on a range of novel technologies would also prove more effective for the development of the new, unique capabilities which are necessary if the United States is to retain the qualitative advantage in the space domain. The doctrine of the use of space capabilities would also become more coherent if developed by a single, specialized body. Thus, the unified Space Force is supposed to emerge as America's sole arm in space, and replace several organizations belonging to the other branches military, along with several separate agencies, which, until now, have pursued much less coordinated policy. This argument is acknowledged not only by politicians and many in the military but also by some of the leading analysts.<sup>26</sup>

But the desired and expected changes along the logic depicted above have not been executed to the full extent yet. According to the current legislation, only the Air Force units have been transferred to the USSF when the USAF Space Command has become the U.S. Space Force. The NDAA for FY 2020 did not make either the Army or the Navy transfer their units engaged in space activities;

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<sup>24</sup> What's the Space Force, United States Space Force, <https://www.spaceforce.mil/About-Us/FAQs/Whats-the-Space-Force> [accessed: 3.04.2020].

<sup>25</sup> J. Gould, V. Insinna, *Congress creating Space Force with limited headroom*, "Defence News", 10.12.2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2019/12/10/congress-creating-space-force-with-limited-head-room/> [accessed: 2.04.2020].

<sup>26</sup> See for example: T. Harrison, *Why We Need a Space Force*, CSIS, October 2018, [http://defense360.csis.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Harrison\\_Endgame\\_D360\\_.pdf](http://defense360.csis.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Harrison_Endgame_D360_.pdf) [accessed: 10.11.2018].

the two branches are only supposed to be “partners” for the USSF.<sup>27</sup> It indicates that rapid expansion of the Space Force capabilities is not envisioned, as there is no clear sign that any additional organization would be moved from other branches to the Space Force. Congress adopted this cautious approach because some influential figures believed that quick creation of the novel and very complicated organization would be difficult and too expensive. Therefore, the lawmakers opted for the gradual approach<sup>28</sup> to the establishment of the new branch and the step-by-step expanding of its capabilities and responsibilities. That is why, there is also no intention whatsoever to subordinate the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), a powerful agency which is responsible for the vast chunk of the space surveillance, to the USSF. Furthermore, the U.S. Special Operations Command intends to establish its own presence in outer space<sup>29</sup>; if it happens more military organizations will be active in Earth’s orbit, not less.

Summarizing, it is currently unclear if the Space Force will actually evolve into a full-fledged branch of the military. As of now, it still represents not much more than only a renamed part of the USAF. Thus, it may very well be reabsorbed into the Air Force, if it fails to prove that a separate branch is essential to fulfilling assigned tasks.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the SDA is supposed to be subordinated to the USSF and form an important part of it, but it is still a separate organization – the process of its absorption may be reversed if it is deemed the better solution. The Space Force must also create its specific organizational culture which would serve as guidelines for its operation and development as a separate service.<sup>31</sup> All in all, the USSF has to prove that it is more than just a part of Donald Trump’s virtual reality and that its creation brings value added to the overall security of the United States.

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<sup>27</sup> V. Insinna, *May the Space Force be with you. Here’s what we know about the US military’s newest service*, “Defense News”, 20.12.2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/breaking-news/2019/12/21/may-the-space-force-be-with-you-heres-what-we-know-about-the-us-militarys-newest-service/> [accessed: 22.12.2019].

<sup>28</sup> L. Hudson, *Introducing U.S. Space Force*, Aviation Week Network, 23.01.2020, <https://aviationweek.com/defense-space/introducing-us-space-force?elq2=f8915ad7b3d54ba3b3d54d61b648b649> [accessed: 25.01.2020].

<sup>29</sup> N. Strout, *Special Operations Command is diving into space*, C4ISRNet, 6.06.2020, [https://www.c4isrnet.com/battlefield-tech/space/2020/06/06/special-operations-command-is-diving-into-space/?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Space%2006.10.20&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20Space%20Report](https://www.c4isrnet.com/battlefield-tech/space/2020/06/06/special-operations-command-is-diving-into-space/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Space%2006.10.20&utm_term=Editorial%20-%20Military%20Space%20Report) [accessed: 8.06.2020].

<sup>30</sup> J. Hickman, *The US Space Force’s long war*, “The Space Review”, 6.04.2020, <https://www.thespacereview.com/article/3914/1> [accessed: 10.04.2020].

<sup>31</sup> J. Anthony, *In search of a space culture*, “The Space Review”, 2.12.2019, <https://www.thespacereview.com/article/3841/1> [accessed: 12.12.2019].

## Conclusions

At first glance, it seems logical that a unified organization tasked to prepare and conduct security-related activities in space should be established. U.S. Space Force as a force provider and force trainer, with conjunction with the U.S. Space Command as a force user, looks well suited to become a single, and ultimately highly effective space arm of the United States. The gradual approach to the creation of the novel branch is also promising, as it should facilitate smooth development and allow to avoid cost overruns.

This crucial argument is, however, debatable. All of the current space activities are of a supportive nature, and there is virtually no space operation which is not closely tied to the operations on Earth. No space combat craft designed to in-orbit warfare is to be deployed in the near future. Satellite systems only provide means of surveillance, positioning, and communications and serve as an information source for combatant commanders and other governmental institutions. Every one of these bodies has specific needs and modes of operations stemming from their specific tasks. If they lose their embedded space capabilities, they risk that their needs will not be met in full by the organization concentrated on a more general approach. With those facts in mind, the creation of single space service seems a much less obviously effective solution. This obstacle may hamper and even reverse the development of the USSF, as this organization may simply not be able to find sufficient and separate mission for itself.

Furthermore, analysts underscore that relatively quick, even if gradual, creation of such a huge organization will not solve problems of space security; even more extended procedure should be implemented instead.<sup>32</sup> Accordingly, some politicians believe that the Space Force “[...] is [...] just another bureaucracy [...]”<sup>33</sup>, suggesting that the novel branch is only a new label for already existing structures. Other analysts point out that the exact shape of organization effort directed to augment U.S. Space capabilities and secure their unhampered use does not matter a lot; the essence of the effort, the understanding of the threat, and proper actions against it are what is really important.<sup>34</sup> Others argue that from the point of view of international security, it is necessary rather

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<sup>32</sup> K. Johnson, *Why a Space Force Can Wait*, CSIS, October 2018, [http://defense360.csis.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Johnson\\_Endgame\\_D360\\_.pdf](http://defense360.csis.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Johnson_Endgame_D360_.pdf) [accessed: 10.11.2018].

<sup>33</sup> Adam Smith (D-Washington) in: E. Howell, *US Space Force's activities still mysterious despite House hearing*, Space.com, 6.03.2020, <https://www.space.com/space-force-mysterious-despite-house-hearing.html> [accessed: 7.03.2020].

<sup>34</sup> B. Bahney, J. Pearl, *Why Creating a Space Force Changes Nothing*, “Foreign Affairs”, 26.03.2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/space/2019-03-26/why-creating-space-force-changes-nothing> [accessed: 30.03.2019].

to promote co-operation in space than declare a race, competition, or struggle for dominance there.<sup>35</sup>

In conclusion, we should point out that the U.S. Space Force is still under construction and there is no clear and widely shared vision of its future. It will probably last for some time in its current shape, at least as a kind of experiment which could be terminated relatively easily if it does not fulfil its promises. But it can also happen that Space Force will prove its value and the argument that the unified service tasked with the full spectrum of space activities will be verified positively. The fate of the SDA is somewhat another issue. If the doubt about the sense of the separate military branch persists, the agency may remain independent as it has already proven its ability to produce interesting concepts. On the other hand, if the USSF does mature, the SDA will surely become a part of it.

All in all, at the moment, it is very difficult to predict the fate of the United States Space Force. Many logistic, technical, and operational obstacles may obstruct its development. The profound changes may also come with a possible change of the primary occupant of the White House. The new president may have the other vision for organization of space effort what could bring the swift demise of the novel service.

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<sup>35</sup> S.M. Patrick, *A New Space Age Demands International Cooperation, Not Competition or ‘Dominance’*, World Politics Review, 20.05.2019, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/27869/a-new-space-age-demands-international-cooperation-not-competition-or-dominance> [accessed: 14.04.2020].

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## The United States Space Force in the American Security Strategy

It is often being argued that Russia, China, and other unfriendly nations are developing a wide range of counter-space systems that are able to degrade the U.S. capabilities in space. Among the other measures to address this problem, the separate service has recently been created within the U.S. military, the United States Space Force. It is tasked to combine space-related capabilities to form a unified and so more effective service than the existing ones scattered across the armed forces. This article depicts and assesses the primary rationale behind the decision to create USSF, against the broad background of the United States security strategy with particular attention to the role of outer space in it. We will, therefore, firstly describe in brief the role of outer space in the security strategy of the United States. Secondly, we will present the current state and mission of the U.S. Space Force and its perspectives. And finally, we will address some controversies related to the creation of the new military branch.

**Key words:** USA, space security, U.S. Space Force, security strategy, outer space, international security, international relations

## Siły Kosmiczne Stanów Zjednoczonych w amerykańskiej strategii bezpieczeństwa

Często argumentuje się, że Rosja, Chiny oraz inne nieprzyjazne USA państwa rozwijają różne środki służące zanegowaniu amerykańskich zdolności do działania w przestrzeni kosmicznej. Obok innych działań nakierowanych na przeciwstawienie się temu zagrożeniu, niedawno powołano Siły Kosmiczne Stanów Zjednoczonych jako osobny rodzaj sił zbrojnych. Ich zadaniem jest połączenie systemów kosmicznych działających na rzecz bezpieczeństwa narodowego w jeden, zunifikowany, a zatem bardziej efektywny podmiot niż w przypadku rozrzuconia tych systemów po różnych rodzajach sił zbrojnych. Artykuł opisuje i ocenia podstawowe założenia stojące za tą decyzją na szerokim tle strategii bezpieczeństwa Stanów Zjednoczonych, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem roli przestrzeni kosmicznej. Dlatego w pierwszej kolejności krótko omówiono rolę przestrzeni kosmicznej w strategii bezpieczeństwa USA, a następnie przedstawiono aktualny stan i zadania Sił Kosmicznych USA. Na koniec odniesiono się do niektórych kontrowersji związanych z utworzeniem nowego rodzaju sił zbrojnych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** USA, bezpieczeństwo kosmiczne, Siły Kosmiczne USA, strategia bezpieczeństwa, przestrzeń kosmiczna, bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe, stosunki międzynarodowe

