

## Remarks of Congressman Mike Rogers

### Chairman, House Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee

#### Presented to the 2017 Space Symposium

In the audience today is Gen William Shelton, USAF, retired, and Lt Gen Sam Greaves, USAF—both are great Americans who helped us make a lot of progress in preparing for a contested space environment. Looking out five or 10 years from now, a question we should ask ourselves is, who will be the next Willie Shelton and Sam Greaves? Well, on 14 March 2017, the Department of Defense published the Air Force list of colonels being nominated to become one-star generals. There are 37 nominees on that list. Would anyone like to guess how many were career space professionals, like then-Colonel Shelton and Colonel Greaves? None.

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 nominees were pilots? The answer is 25 officers. That is 67 percent of the next class of Air Force generals. I have no doubt these are 37 amazing leaders. But if we are looking for our next Gen William Shelton, Gen Jay Raymond, Gen John Hyten, and Lt Gen Sam Greaves—each a career space professional—then we don't have one in this latest group of nominees. This does not bode well for our ability to be ready for the threats we face in space. It is also telling as to the status and priority given to space in the current organizational construct of the Air Force.

Einstein once said, "If I had an hour to solve a problem I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and five minutes thinking about solutions." So, I'm going to take my cue from Einstein and spend most of the time identifying the main problems we face today in the space domain. First, let me discuss the problems as I see them from Congress. I certainly don't need to explain how important space is to our national security, our war fighters, our economy, and our way of life. And I also

The Space Foundation hosted the 2017 Space Symposium in Colorado Springs, Colorado, 3–6 April. This is the premier space event of the year with 12,000 participants and 106 speakers over the course of a week. These remarks have been edited for publication.

don't need to explain 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 a war-fighting domain. And if you haven't seen the CNN special "War in Space," I highly recommend you watch it. Just go to YouTube, and you can watch the 45-minute segment. I give a lot of credit to the DOD for supporting this effort and providing such a candid view of the current situation and I hope the DOD does more of this. We have to tell the American people about the threats our potential adversaries are planning. Now this 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 antisatellite missile. While potential adversaries have gotten a lot more capable, we've spent the better part of the past 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 who 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 even in space. And if you don't believe me, I'll read you a quote from Gen John Hyten, commander of US 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 take us where we need to be? Obviously the answer is no.

What initially got my attention on the organization and management issue was a GAO study that was briefed to me last summer. The most shocking revelation was that most of the information in the study was not new—this was at least the third time this issue was studied over a 16-year period, starting with the Rumsfeld Commission, and each study 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 21<sup>st</sup> century." So since last summer, I've made space organization and management my number one priority for the rest of this Congress. Along with my friend and ranking member, Jim Cooper, and

other members of the subcommittee, we have been conducting extensive oversight of this topic. So, what are those problems?

## **Space Organization and Decision-Making Are Extremely Fragmented**

When we asked the department for an organizational chart so 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.” Instead, they gave us a list of 60 offices that are involved in national security space. So I then asked my staff to do it, because they can’t tell me no. What they discovered is a whole lot of people are “in charge” beneath the deputy and secretary of defense. And when everyone is in charge, no one is in charge. Some might say the “Principal DOD Space Advisor (PDSA)” is in charge. The PDSA is also the secretary of the Air Force. However when the word “advisor” is in the title, by definition, they’re not in charge. And does anyone think there might be a conflict of interest between space and the other mission priorities of the Air Force? Moreover, count how many of these leaders are separately Senate-confirmable. My point is there are too many chiefs in the space camp and the nation won’t have a complete space team in place until five to 10 people are nominated and confirmed.

Another problem is the operational, acquisition, and resourcing authorities are not aligned. For example, while General Hyten was the commander of Air Force Space Command, he and his team worked very hard to develop a “space enterprise vision” for the future. While he 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 where everyone can say “no” but no one is truly accountable and empowered to say “yes.” Now contrast the military space program with the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO). 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. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen David Goldfein has seen my chart of the space chain of command and to his credit publi-

cally stated that 60 voices is “no way to run a railroad.” But I’m not sure Chief Goldfein is ready to do what is necessary to fix this railroad. The current bureaucracy moves too slowly; we don’t have the time to wait, and I won’t.

## **Space Funding Is Not Being Given the Priority It Needs**

National security space is competing with other service priorities. For example, the Air Force has 90 percent 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 number one 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.” In other words, 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 (CAPE), 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 it to fiscal year 2013—the year the Defense sequester kicked in. Space investment went down 28 percent the year of the sequester while total Air Force investment went down 13 percent that year. OK, so, they both went 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 investment 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 investment during that same period? It’s up 30 percent! So to recap: over the 10-year period, Air Force national security space investment is down 23 percent while total Air Force investment is up 30 percent. 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 two 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 taxpayers' 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 funding, organization, and management.

### **The National Security Space Community Lacks Adequate Professional Development**

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 I told you about in the beginning, does this sound like good stewardship? Are we telling the men and women of national security space 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?

Furthermore, according to the CAPE office, the Air Force Space and Missiles Systems Center “does not appear to compete favorably for senior officers (~65 percent fill rate for captains and above, versus 150 percent fill rate for lieutenants).” And I hear a lot from the Air Force about pilot shortages. In the war-fighting 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—which is in my district and should be prioritizing space—the topic is only covered for a total of two hours in each of the yearlong Air Command and Staff College and Air War College master's degree 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 two hours of the yearlong professional development programs for future leaders? The total class hours for Air Command and Staff College is 450 hours. Two hours of that for space is equivalent to half of one percent.

Further, space professionals are not managed in a holistic manner, despite calls to do so. In 2001, then-Secretary Rumsfeld directed the Air Force to create a space career management plan to include military and civilian personnel and include the various associated career fields. Unfortunately there is no formal Air Force space career field outside of space operations. In fact, the Air Force used to give a space badge (or space wings) to both acquisitions and operations officers; however, this changed a few years ago to only award the space badge to operations officers. This situation leads to a lack of development of a “tribe” mentality, for a unified group of space war-fighting professionals. This is a cultural issue. How you promote, pay, and retain your people shows whether or not they’re important to you. I don’t like what I’m seeing here when it comes to national security space.

Meanwhile, the Army has over 4,000 space cadre professionals including military and civilian members. If you perform space functions in the Army and have the appropriate training and experience, then you get a space badge. 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: “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 war fighting, whether it’s infantry, armor, paratroopers, or space.

## **Space Programs Need Better Integration**

Now let me stop picking on the Air Force for a little and pick on the Navy. The Navy operates the Mobile User Objective System (MUOS) satellite program, which is essentially like a cell phone tower in space. It’s going to be a great capability—and we have five 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 the ground terminals, which is a joint program. This is just unacceptable for a \$7 billion program. More recently, testing 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, or the Space-Based Infrared System’s (SBIRS) ground processing. 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. As we head into space being a war-fighting domain, coordination and appropriate integration will be more important than ever. Someone needs to do a better job pulling this all together. Why isn't this someone's priority? Because no one is in charge.

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 [that] is attempting to knock out one of our primary advantages for how we fight and win wars. So what can we do about it?

### **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 US Army Signal Corps. Even in those early years, bold airmen realized that the full promise of airpower could not be attained if it simply remained a division of another Army corps. Well before Billy Mitchell or Hap Arnold, who would come along much later, Infantryman Capt Paul Beck wrote an article in 1912 for the *Infantry Journal* entitled "Military Aviation in America: Its Needs." In this article, Beck advocated for a "permanent organization" as essential to the success of American aviation, laying out the first doctrinal aspects of airpower. 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 recurring debate, study, and organizational change while air leaders pushed 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 [that] took the next step toward 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 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 airpower 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 development timeline, and how does it end?

## **The 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 begin each morning thinking about fighters and bombers first. Don’t get



me wrong—I want planes and pilots to be priorities for the Air Force. At the same time, I want space to be as much of a priority for the professionals responsible for military space. I am not suggesting radical surgery. The amputation will not begin tomorrow, so everyone can breathe a sigh of relief. But I believe bold reform is needed—and it must start now. Today I'm not going to tell you what the changes will look like, but you will start to see some of them in the House Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee mark-up this year and next. Here are the principles 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. This leader must have the authority to make things happen and will be accountable for success. If you take a good look at the current organization, you see what we in the South know as “kudzu.” 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 our current organization is not 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. We must go beyond just the words, and space must not remain a subservient mission. Until the day comes when we have a separate Space Force, funding needs to be protected above the services so the space accounts are not raided by other service missions.

Third, there must be a clearly identified cadre of space professionals who are trained, promoted, and sustained as space experts. Air Force leaders have talked about normalizing space and treating space as a war-fighting domain. All other domains of air, land, and sea have established cultures, professions, and identifiers. Now it's time for space to have the same. Because at the end of the day, we all know 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 more closely together especially in this new contested domain and that the office of the secretary of defense oversight 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 held accountable for this portion of the space architecture.

## **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 percent of the more than 17,000 coalition airstrikes since 2014. They delivered 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, at the same time, it is our space capabilities that are being targeted by potential adversaries. This is not a question of having good people, it is a question of what structure we put them in. History has shown how difficult it is for a government bureaucracy to fix itself. This is exactly why congressional oversight exists. It is our duty to recognize when the bureaucracy is broken and to then see that it is fixed. 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 the organizational chart without deleting many others. Our ultimate goal must be to align accountability with authority, reduce bureaucracy, and deconflict other mission areas while prioritizing both space investments and the people charged with war fighting in the space domain. 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. Thank you. **SSQ**

**Congressman Mike Rogers (R-AL)**

*Chairman, HASC Strategic Forces Subcommittee*

## **Disclaimer**

The views and opinions expressed or implied in SSQ are those of the authors and are not officially sanctioned by any agency or department of the US government. We encourage you to send comments to: [strategicstudiesquarterly@us.af.mil](mailto:strategicstudiesquarterly@us.af.mil).