

Space Force Officials Meet with Biden Team as First Anniversary Nears

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As the U.S. Space Force gets ready to celebrate its first anniversary five days from now, Chief of Space Operations Gen. Jay Raymond says he has met with the Biden transition team and had a very good conversation. The Space Force was created by law with bipartisan support, but many attribute it to President Trump. Some speculate that with Trump's departure, the Space Force's existence may be endangered even though there has been no indication of that so far.

Speaking with reporters today, Raymond said he had "a really good conversation" with representatives of President-elect Joe Biden's Agency Review Team. He declined to provide details or speculate on what the incoming Administration may do, but conveyed that the meeting was a positive experience.

Raymond and Space Force Chief Master Sergeant Roger Towberman reviewed what the new military service has accomplished in its first year. Both expressed great pride "for the work that our space professionals have done in establishing this Service."

In this Century, the idea of creating a separate entity for space within DOD dates back to a **2001 commission chaired by Donald Rumsfeld** that examined, **at congressional direction**, various options for organizing national security space. It concluded a Space Corps within the Air Force was the best first step and perhaps a Department of Space in the longer term. Rumsfeld soon

thereafter became Secretary of Defense (for the second time) under President George W. Bush, but did not implement that recommendation.

A decade-and-a-half later, in 2017, a **proposal** to create a Space Corps within the Air Force was included in the House-passed FY2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) due to the efforts of the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee's (HASC's) Strategic Forces Subcommittee at the time, Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL) and Rep. Jim Cooper (D-TN). The Trump White House, DOD and the Air Force strongly opposed it and the Senate Armed Services Committee **did not agree** so the provision was not in the final version of that year's bill.

Soon thereafter, however, Trump **began talking publicly** about creating a Department of the Space Force, separate from and equal to the Air Force. In **June 2018**, Trump specifically and publicly directed DOD to do it. After months of studies and negotiations, the FY2020 NDAA, **signed into law on December 20, 2019**, established an entity called the Space Force, but as part of the Air Force as the Rogers-Cooper Space Corps proposal envisioned.

The Space Corps terminology evoked the Marine Corps, which is part of the Department of the Navy, and that is the relationship Space Force has with the Air Force.

The day the FY2020 NDAA was signed into law, Raymond was Commander of Air Force Space Command (AFSC) which thereupon transformed into U.S. Space Force (USSF) and Raymond became Chief of Space Operations. AFSC's 16,000 personnel were assigned to USSF, but did not transfer into it, a separate process that is still underway.

For the past year, Raymond and his team, including Towberman, have been creating the new military service from scratch. Today's virtual meeting with reporters was an opportunity to review all that has been accomplished in the past 12 months and what comes next.

Raymond exuded that the progress "far surpasses anything I would have expected."

We have completely reorganized the national security space organization. It is the largest restructure in our history. Doing all the planning and establishing Pentagon staff — when initial numbers were being vetted for the Chief of Space Operations staff it was over 1,000 people. We’ve designed that to come in right at 600 folks, cutting 40 percent of bureaucracy right off the bat.

His long list of accomplishments also includes building partnerships within DOD and the Intelligence Community as well as with international allies and partners. He noted that earlier today he signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Japan to “solidify” an agreement to place two U.S. payloads for space domain awareness on Japanese QZSS navigation satellites.

This first year was all about inventing the [Space Force] Service. This next year is all about integrating the Space Force more broadly and the planning guidance that we published just a month or so ago provides the sheet music for the overall integration. It has five priority areas: empowering a lean and agile Service; developing joint warfighters and world class teams; delivering new capabilities, and being able to do that at speed, which is critical; expanding our cooperation and partnerships; and the fifth area is building the Service as a digital Service.

The NDAA made the CSO a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff beginning one year from enactment. Raymond already is participating in meetings of the Joint Chiefs, but his role becomes official on Sunday.

Last year when he donned his CSO hat, Raymond not only was Commander of AFSC but of U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM), one of the 11 unified combatant commands in charge of warfighting. Trump **reestablished** USSPACECOM after a 17-year hiatus in August 2019.

Raymond has since **handed off USSPACECOM to Gen. James Dickinson**, but during the time he led both Space Force and USSPACECOM, and with the similarity in their names, much confusion arose about the relationship between the two.

Space Force is one of the six military services, along with the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. They “organize, train, and equip” personnel who are then ready to be called upon by the **unified combatant commands**, like USSPACECOM, when needed.

The Biden team has made no public indication that it plans to make major changes to, much less try to abolish, Space Force, but that has not prevented speculation about the Service's future. It does have skeptics, including Robert Farley of the University of Kentucky who recently published a paper for the Cato Institute concluding its creation was premature and lacked sufficient thought about what the Space Force should do.

Raymond declined to discuss what may happen when the new Administration takes office, asserting only that the Space Force will remain focused on building a Service that “delivers national advantage for a long time.”