



TRANSCRIPT

U.S. Space Command
Change of Command Ceremony
Hangar 140, Peterson AFB, Colo.

Commander, United States Space Command, General James H. Dickinson

20 August 2020

ANNOUNCER: It is my honor to introduce, for the first time, the Commander United States Space Command, General James Dickinson.

(APPLAUSE)

GEN JAMES DICKINSON: Good morning! Thank you all for being here today, especially under these extraordinary circumstances. I am truly humbled, and deeply honored, to assume command of U.S. Space Command. I am thankful to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the secretary of defense, and to the president of the United States for the trust and confidence they have placed in me to lead our nation's newest combatant command in its role to protect, defend, and advance our nation's interests in space.

I am grateful, and indeed very fortunate, to have worked for General Raymond as his deputy in U.S. Space Command. He likes to joke that by me becoming the commander, he'll now be working for me in his Space Force role. The truth is, as we both strive to deliver space warfighters, and space capabilities, to our nation, i couldn't ask for a better partner, companion, and friend. Thank you, Gen Raymond, for your untiring efforts to establish U.S. Space Command, for your tremendous support to the warfighters of this command, and for your visionary work to set us on a trajectory for success. I look forward to working with you in our new roles ... and am excited to see if you still remember how to function with just one hat!

To our Colorado civic leaders, thank you for your continuous support to the men and women in uniform, which is so critical to the success of the missions of our local military bases. On a personal note, although I've been back for several months now, as a Colorado native and a alumni of both Colorado state university and Colorado school of mines, I can honestly say, it's great to be home!

I am deeply indebted to my family for all their support and love over the years. First and foremost is my wife of 34 years and my high school sweetheart, Angie. Of course our daughter Deborah and her husband Matt, our son Hank and his wife Sara, our daughter Olivia, our son

Joe, and most certainly our grandchildren Reagan, Junior, Colton, Peyton, and Riley who are without a doubt the stars of our lives.

Angie and I could not be more proud of our family, as they represent the resiliency, toughness, and service that make military kids so successful. While the army considers them my dependents, the reality is, I am dependent on them. I certainly would not be here today if it was not for their sacrifices, love, and support. Thank you!

And finally, I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the members of our new extended joint family, the warfighters of United States Space Command -- the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, space professionals, allies, interagency partners, government civilians, and contract partners. You are the real source of this combatant command's combat power. You've worked tirelessly over the last year to establish this command, and to create the conditions for its success in this new warfighting domain. I am grateful to have been a part of this effort, so far, and I am proud of each of you.

When I reflect on what has changed over the course of this last year, I am encouraged. We have built key relationships with international partners supporting multiple facets of the space domain awareness mission area and have established sharing agreements with several nations, commercial industries, and academic institutions. We have developed new training programs to grow a cadre that is always focused on our space capabilities. Along with our headquarters element, we now have:

- a combined force space component command providing space-enabled capabilities and effects to the warfighter from Vandenberg AFB with significant contributions from allies and partners from several nations, some of which are represented here today.
- a Joint Task Force-Space Defense charged with leading our efforts to gain and maintain space superiority and defeat counter-space threats to our nation and our allies.
- embedded space integrated planning elements in seven combatant commands, and are in the process of establishing similar elements at the remaining three, with the purpose of ensuring

space effects are fully synchronized in the planning and execution processes of all U.S. and allied combat operations.

To say that this is an exciting time to be in the space business is a major understatement. It is, quite frankly, a critical time for our nation. The recently released defense space strategy, describes how our adversaries are developing, testing, and deploying counterpace capabilities as well as evolving their military doctrines to include their employment in a conflict that extends into the space domain. In the process, they are not only challenging the U.S. security and prosperity, they have turned a once peaceful environment into a warfighting domain.

It is important to note, that space is a warfighting domain, not because we want it to be, but because our adversaries have seen the advantages space has provided to our way of life, and our way of war, and they constantly to seek ways to hold our space assets at risk. As our adversaries continue to weaponize space, as we recently saw in July, U.S. Space Command stands postured to deter, and if necessary, defeat those threats.

The unified command plan is very clear: our mission is to protect and defend U.S. and allied interests in space. To be clear, our objective is to deter a conflict from beginning in, or extending to space and to enable our nation to compete in space from a position of strength. However, should deterrence fail, our imperative is clear: we will win. To do so, we will require a space warfighting culture that permeates our entire command.

I believe our experiences make us who we are, and my career's worth of experience as an army air defense artilleryman has shaped my warfighter perspective. By training and by experience – in fact, by design – that warfighting mindset is inculcated into every member of the army's combat arms branches. It colors every analysis we perform, every recommendation we provide, and every decision we make. It is baked into our culture. My pledge to you is that my focus as the commander will be on developing, nurturing, and embracing a space warfighting culture. Every effort, every decision point, every initiative, and every trade off we make will occur in the context of assessing its contribution to our ability deter conflict and, if necessary, to fight and win in space.

To the men and women of U.S. Space Command, in the coming days and weeks, we will further develop and refine our intent, priorities, roadmap, and measures of effectiveness. The process will be iterative, inclusive, but most importantly, laser-focused on honing our warfighting capability and developing our warfighting culture. Through that approach, I am confident that we will meet our national imperatives for space, be able to execute the tasks assigned to us by our national command authorities, and honor the trust placed in us by the American people to effectively protect and defend their interests in space.

As highlighted in our defense space strategy, we are facing “the most significant transformation in the history of the U.S. national security space program”. We have a unique opportunity and a solemn responsibility. As commander, I take this responsibility seriously. The U.S. is the best in space today. U.S. Space Command will ensure this remains true as we work to implement the national defense strategy, defense space strategy, and unified command plan direction for maintaining space superiority and protecting and defending our critical space capabilities.

Thank you all again for your support today. I am excited about the opportunity to lead our newest combatant command, and more excited still for the chance to work alongside you in executing this vital mission in defense of our great nation, our partners and our allies.

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)