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**Written Statement of Ms. Andrea Yaffe
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House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request for National Security Space Programs
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Introduction

Chairman DesJarlais, Ranking Member Moulton, and distinguished members of the Committee: Thank you for inviting me to testify before you on the Department of Defense's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget Request for National Security Space Programs. I am honored to appear alongside my colleagues from the Department of the Air Force and the Intelligence Community.

Space and space programs remain central to the Department's core mission of deterring conflict and ensuring our national security. The President, the Secretary, and, indeed, the entire Joint Force rely on the capabilities provided by our space architecture. Space systems and spectrum enable our nuclear forces; our nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3); strategic warning; missile defense; communications; global force projection; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR). Space will also be essential to the Golden Dome for America (GD4A) architecture. Taken together, our space capabilities are integral to the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance's priorities of defending the homeland and deterring China, and present unique opportunities to increase burden sharing with our allies and partners.

China and Russia, meanwhile, are rapidly fielding space and counterspace systems designed to neutralize our space-enabled military advantages and hold the Joint Force at risk. These developments pose an increasing and unacceptable threat to the United States and our allies and partners, including the commercial space sector. Our ongoing investments seek to ensure the Department can establish space superiority, assure critical space-enabled missions, retain capabilities to deny adversary hostile uses of space, and ensure the Joint Force continues to have access to – and freedom to operate in – space.

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FY 2026 Space Budget Request

The Department is finalizing the FY 2026 budget request, which I anticipate will include a range of space-related investments aligned with the Administration's priorities. The Department's continued development and fielding of more resilient architectures will directly support robust missile warning and missile tracking capability that provides timely warning of threats to the homeland and our forward-deployed forces. Satellite communications and data transport investments across multiple orbital regimes will enable command and control across the globe, from mission critical NC3 to tactical communications. The Department is continuing to invest in space control capabilities to counter hostile uses of space and protect and defend U.S. and, as directed, allied, partner, and commercial space capabilities that support our critical missions. We continue to invest in space domain awareness systems to provide space operators with timely information and prevent operational surprise. Underlying this all, National Security Space Launch provides assured access to space so we can put these important capabilities into orbit.

Security Environment

The scale and scope of the challenges presented by the increasing number of space and space-enabled threats pose a substantial and growing risk to the American people, U.S. national interests, and our allies and partners. Moreover, the growing cooperation and potential for increasing coordinated action among China, Russia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Iran is a clear indicator that they share a common interest in undermining U.S. interests and alliances globally.

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China continues to develop counterspace capabilities to contest or deny other nations' access to and operations in the space domain. These include direct-ascent anti-satellite missiles, co-orbital satellites, electromagnetic warfare, and directed-energy systems. China seeks to enhance the People's Liberation Army's space-enabled capabilities – including systems enabling the ability to track, target, and strike our Joint Force – and is increasing the number of space systems it has on orbit. More broadly, China's space enterprise continues to mature rapidly, and China has devoted significant resources to growing all aspects of its space program, from military space applications to civil and commercial applications.

Like China, Russia seeks to exploit what it perceives as U.S. reliance on space for military operations and is investing in a similar range of offensive counterspace capabilities. Russia has also conducted cyber intrusions against commercial satellite communication networks and Russia has repeatedly threatened commercial satellites providing space-based services to Russia's adversaries, calling them potential targets. The Department also remains concerned that Russia is developing a new satellite meant to carry a nuclear weapon as an anti-satellite capability. Placing a nuclear weapon, or other weapon of mass destruction, in orbit around the Earth, installing such a weapon on celestial bodies, or stationing such a weapon in outer space in any other manner would violate the Outer Space Treaty and would be inherently destabilizing because of the potential for miscalculation, the risk of technical mishap, and the potential for Russia's loss of command and control. Placing a nuclear weapon on orbit is not merely a threat against any one nation, but a threat against all nations. A detonation of such a weapon would likewise be an attack on the United States and harm all nations because it would damage or destroy space systems that all nations depend upon, including systems providing vital

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communications, scientific, meteorological, agricultural, commercial, public safety, and national security services.

The DPRK and Iran also continue to develop their nascent space programs. The DPRK has conducted several reconnaissance satellite launch attempts in recent years in violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions related to the DPRK's use of ballistic missile technology. Iran's development of space launch vehicles, such as the Simorgh, would shorten the timeline to produce an intercontinental ballistic missile, if Iran decided to develop one, because the systems use similar technologies. Both the DPRK and Iran also maintain non-kinetic counterspace capabilities, including systems for jamming communications and GPS signals. We are also aware of Russia's intention to share advanced space and satellite technology with the DPRK, which would likely speed up the development and fielding of DPRK's space capabilities. Similarly, Iran has used Russian launch services to place communications and navigation satellites into orbit.

Foundations of Strategic Approach in Space

The United States seeks a secure, stable, and accessible space domain to allow for its continued use for commercial, scientific, and national security activities. China and Russia recognize the United States's reliance on space and are both developing and fielding counterspace capabilities designed to deny our freedom of action in space and target U.S. forces on Earth. Space superiority is thus integral to achieving peace through strength in the face of these threats – principally through deterrence and defense in peacetime, but also by enabling the Joint Force to prevail in all stages of conflict if deterrence fails. Specifically, space superiority

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underlies our ability to defend the homeland and to deter China by denying their ability to confidently hold the Joint Force at risk.

To achieve space superiority, we are executing on the Secretary's guidance to pursue a robust, combat credible force and accompanying operational plans for space, just as the Department does in all domains. We are leveraging our competitive advantages, including our commercial space sector and allies and partners, who are increasing investments in space security and are looking to work with the United States to strengthen deterrence and defense. The Department is pressing on several lines of effort in our space policy that enhance our ability to defend the homeland, deter China, and increase burden-sharing.

Mission Assurance

The Department's investments reflect the strategic imperative to assure the ability to accomplish critical national security missions. In support of these imperatives, our space architecture must be engineered to fight through multiple attack vectors ranging from cyberspace network attack to direct kinetic engagement. Our space capabilities must also account for adversaries' differing approaches to the hostile use of space.

Through a combination of resilient architectures, supported by defensive capabilities and reconstitution, we are investing and posturing to deny adversaries the benefits of an attack in space. The U.S. Space Force's (USSF) Space Development Agency's Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture has been one prominent example of the commitment to mission assurance through resilience through proliferation. The USSF has leveraged spiral development to deploy a resilient constellation of small satellites that supports important missions and enhances our

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strategic posture in areas like missile warning, missile tracking, missile defense, and data transport. These proliferated architectures will also be central to enabling GD4A.

Our relationships with industry and allies and partners worldwide are also important sources of resilience across space mission areas. With access to more commercial data and contributions from allies and partners, we diversify – and thus make more resilient – the elements of our space architecture.

Space Control

However, resilience alone does not mitigate every threat. An adversary's uncontested use of space in a conflict could be used to deny the freedom of operation to all joint military operations on Earth and in space. Commensurate with this risk, the Department is implementing a balanced space deterrence force structure that includes capabilities for offensive and defensive space control missions. This approach ensures the President and Secretary have options to deliver effects that contribute to our ability to defend the homeland and deter China. Current investments related to space control include integrated space fires and protection capabilities, modernized and agile electronic warfare architecture, enhanced battlespace awareness and space systems defense, and a range of other capabilities.

Joint Force space operations could use a variety of reversible and irreversible means to deny both an adversary's counterspace capabilities and its hostile use of space. Such operations could originate in any domain and target on-orbit, ground, cyber, or link segments to reduce the scope and scale of an adversary's ability to exploit the space domain in support of aggression, whether in space or on Earth.

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In providing options to national leadership, we will balance the development, testing, and employment of these capabilities with our need to maintain a space environment that is stable, secure, safe, and sustainable for continued operations. To that end, the Department is also making progress on complementary process improvements to normalize space as an operational domain. These updates are enabling more efficient review and approval of sensitive activities, including aggressively tackling overclassification, continuing reform of special access programs, and regular incorporation of space capabilities into the operational planning, training, and exercise processes.

Norms of Behavior in Space

Our national security space programs are supported by the Department's ongoing efforts to shape the strategic environment and set conditions for operational success. As part of this effort, norms help to set a baseline for behavior in space from which it becomes easier to discern anomalous behavior. At a time when both China and Russia have weaponized space by deploying and testing increasing numbers and novel types of orbital weapons, and after Russia generated large amounts of orbital debris that threatens the space environment through a destructive, direct-ascent anti-satellite missile test, this baseline understanding is of utmost importance.

In coming years, thousands more satellites are set to join the thousands already on orbit. Without strong and active efforts to maintain the U.S. advantage, our adversaries will exploit the opportunity to create rules of the road for this increasingly congested domain and propose unworkable and disingenuous treaties or standards that constrain our freedom of action.

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Commercial

The innovative capabilities, scalable production capacity, and rapid technology refresh rates of the U.S. commercial space sector are competitive advantages the Department is also leveraging to enhance our national security space programs. The Department released its first Commercial Space Integration Strategy last year, outlining how we will integrate commercial space solutions, including ensuring access across the spectrum of conflict and establishing necessary security conditions. The strategy also states clearly that we will integrate commercial space solutions to enhance resilience and add capability without imposing unacceptable risk for all of the national security space mission areas.

There is tremendous potential to build on the success of commercial providers to increase the lethality of the Joint Force and enhance our ability to defend the homeland and deter China. There are opportunities to be found in each mission area, including command and control; cyberspace operations; electromagnetic warfare; environmental monitoring; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; missile warning; nuclear detonation detection; positioning, navigation, and timing; space access, mobility, and logistics; satellite communications; space domain awareness; and spacecraft operations.

True integration will require a cultural shift within the Department. To that end, the Department will prioritize eliminating the structural, procedural, and cultural barriers to overcoming legacy practices and preconceived notions of how the commercial sector can support national security. Our uniformed colleagues are already taking action. For example, U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM) is co-sponsoring an effort with SpaceWERX on sustained space maneuver. The Command will identify 10 proposals for \$1.9 million each in funding. This

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effort will invest in promising technology from the commercial industry to help solve the sustained space maneuver challenge and support bringing a joint function to the space domain.

Allies and Partners

Space is a domain that supports missions across all domains. Combined with our efforts to integrate commercial space sector innovations within our national security space architecture, expanded cooperation with allies and partners is integral to our national security space programs. Allies and partners help ensure the Department is effectively postured and positioned around the globe to address the growing magnitude and vectors of threats in, from, and to space. The aspiration of other countries to invest in space security has given rise to new opportunities to cooperate across the spectrum of conflict, share the burden of defense, and strengthen deterrence. This burden sharing is a Department priority in and of itself, but our space cooperation with allies and partners contributes to our other strategic goals of defending the homeland and deterring China.

Nowhere is this more evident than the Combined Space Operations (CSpO) initiative, a multinational partnership to prevent conflict in space. Since its inception in 2014 with four members, the CSpO initiative has grown to ten nations including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Together, we have improved cooperation to extend options for diplomatic and military responses in crisis situations, including by broadening the number of systems available for space operations, principally through USSPACECOM's Multi-National Force Operation OLYMPIC DEFENDER (MNF-OOD). The countries in CSpO and MNF-OOD include our most capable space-faring allies who are significantly increasing their spending on space security and defense.

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They also represent different parts of the world. This geographic and political diversity lends itself to the global terrestrial footprint that space operations require and supports our efforts to shape the strategic environment in both the norms and messaging arenas.

But the Department's efforts to integrate with our allies and partners to be combat multipliers are not limited to CSpO and MNF-OOD. The USSF increasingly augments U.S. warfighting systems with allied contributions. This includes expanding essential wideband global communications services that enable combatant commanders to exercise command and control of their tactical forces, leveraging allied systems such as Norway's Arctic Satellite Broadband Mission and Japan's Quasi-Zenith Satellite System to place U.S. military payloads in space, and fielding the Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability with Australia and the U.K. to protect critical U.S. and allied satellite services. In this resource constrained environment, the USSF is attempting to drive this model of cooperation harder with a strategy of Allied by Design that aims to field a military space architecture that includes allies and partners from inception, not merely as an afterthought. By including allies and partners early in our force design processes, we can coalesce our requirements and increasingly share the resource burden to field warfighting systems with our closest allies and partners. In many cases, these partnerships unlock opportunities otherwise unavailable to us by virtue of unique geography or represent significant cost savings for the United States compared to investing in our own standalone capabilities.

We have also made important progress reducing outdated space classification barriers that have hindered collaboration across the Department, with allies and partners, and with the commercial space sector. Among other changes that have unlocked opportunities for closer cooperation, the Department's new classification policy for space capabilities permits conceptual

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discussions on space control capabilities that were previously restricted. In several instances, we have been able to share insights from our experiences and support allies in making informed investment decisions for protecting and defending their sovereign systems that support coalition operations. Even this seemingly minor change has removed a major obstacle and unlocked new avenues of collaborative discussion with key allies, including opportunities for allies to assume more of the burden of defense by contributing their capabilities or capacity.

Conclusion

The Department remains committed to making the necessary investments in our space programs to deter our adversaries and, if deterrence fails, prevail in conflict. This mission requires sufficient and consistent funding and support. Thank you for your dedication to our mission and our servicemembers, and for the opportunity to testify to you today alongside my distinguished colleagues. I look forward to answering your questions.

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