

Statement for the Record

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Cooper, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear before you today on behalf of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) to discuss National Security Space Activities. It is an honor for me to appear alongside our mission partners from the Department of Defense (DoD), Mr. Douglas Loverro, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy, Mr. Gil Klinger, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space and Intelligence, Lt General John Raymond, Commander, United States Strategic Command, Joint Functional Component Command for Space, and General William Shelton, Commander, Air Force Space Command. The NRO's close relationship and continuing collaboration with our mission partners are vital to maintaining our Nation's superiority in space.

The unclassified nature of today's hearing precludes me from discussing many details of NRO programs, as well as sharing some of our greatest successes. However, I welcome additional opportunities to meet in another setting to discuss with you NRO capabilities, partnerships, and value of the NRO contributions to National Security.

NRO Priorities

The NRO remains committed to maintaining its stellar record of acquisition and program successes, while also delivering a more capable, resilient, and affordable future NRO architecture to respond to emerging threats and dynamic mission needs. Over the coming years, the NRO will incorporate revolutionary new technologies into our architecture that will provide enhanced support to the warfighter

while also improving the resiliency of our systems. These technologies are made possible in part by our investments in research and development, and we will continue these strong investments to drive enhanced future capabilities. We also continue to improve our relationships with our key mission partners to adapt on-orbit systems and capabilities to support current warfighter needs.

State of the NRO

I would like to begin with a few words about the current state of the NRO. We are committed to smart acquisition investments and practices to ensure the continued coverage and availability of our vital National Security systems and we work tirelessly to continue to deliver these systems on time and within budget. To that end, last year our acquisition programs successfully delivered and launched two new satellites into orbit, and just last week we successfully launched yet another critical capability for our nation. In addition to our primary missions, one of our launches also carried 12 university and government CubeSat payloads for the NRO and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Our CubeSat program allows us to demonstrate new technologies at an affordable cost while also strengthening our ties with university Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics programs. We are on track to continue our launch and program successes through the remainder of the year as well, with two more satellite launches scheduled for later this year. These successful launches are a visible testament to the diligent efforts of our program teams who successfully acquire and deliver

these complex systems, and each one signifies enhanced intelligence capabilities for the warfighter.

The NRO remains committed to maintaining the health of the launch vehicle industrial base to provide our systems with assured access to space. The NRO, in partnership with the Air Force, recently finalized a new Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) acquisition strategy aimed at promoting competition among certified launch providers while also stabilizing launch cost and sustaining the industrial base. Consistent with the New Entrant Launch Vehicle Strategy, the NRO, Air Force, and NASA, are working together to evaluate new entrant launch vehicle capabilities. We are working with launch providers to ensure the new commercial capabilities being developed can provide the same robust levels of mission success that have been the cornerstone of our EELV program; we are also relying on our Air Force mission partner to hold a competitive acquisition for one of our launches later this year, provided Air Force certification is completed. We are dedicated to working with the Air Force, NASA, and commercial space providers to ensure our Nation's launch and space industrial base remains strong enough to meet our mission requirements.

The tremendous successes of our satellite programs are a testament to the strength of our workforce. As you know, we draw our personnel from across the DoD and Intelligence Community (IC), and the talented people of the NRO allow our significant and continued mission success. This year we are taking steps to develop a core NRO workforce to further strengthen our workforce and to provide continuing opportunities for growth and development to our personnel.

A dedicated NRO workforce will provide us with enhanced stability across core NRO functions and increase our ability to evolve the workforce in the long-term while allowing us to continue to leverage rotational personnel for their innovation and experience. By strengthening our core NRO workforce while also leveraging community workforce strengths, the NRO will continue to provide the Nation with the premier space reconnaissance capabilities for National security.

Thanks to our talented personnel, we have also made tremendous strides in the development and optimization of our Ground and Communications systems. Our Ground Enterprise continues to develop innovative techniques and find new ways to process mission data, providing an architecture that is responsive to user needs, more resilient in the face of projected threats, and much more efficient and effective in providing mission capabilities. Additionally, we continue to improve our network and cloud security processes and optimize our network infrastructure as we integrate with the IC Information Technology Enterprise.

In addition to developing, acquiring, launching, and operating the world's most technically advanced systems, we have also sustained our success in optimizing our business systems. For the fifth year in a row, the NRO received a clean audit opinion on our financial statements, a truly unprecedented accomplishment within the IC. This positive outcome was the result of continued hard work across the NRO and the culmination of a diligently planned and executed effort to continue our effective financial management. NRO's internal processes for proper funds management and accurate financial reports have been

validated, and we are successfully positioned to continue to sustain this clean audit into the future.

SPACE PROTECTION

The NRO fully recognizes that space is an increasingly contested and congested environment. While foreign nations understand our country's reliance on space and seek means to deny our space advantages, our ability to operate in the presence of threats helps to deter foreign actions and maintain a strategic advantage. To that end, the NRO has worked jointly with the Air Force to align the NRO's space protection activities with Air Force Space Command, the DoD, and the broader space community. The collaboration across the defense and intelligence communities enhances the NRO's capability to effectively plan for emerging threats, and greatly strengthens the architecture to ensure continued operational freedom.

NRO CONTRIBUTIONS: CRITICAL TO THE FIGHT.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the real bottom line for the NRO - our support to the warfighter. In addition to traditional NRO ISR systems and support, we provide a wide array of focused capabilities to help solve specific, critical ISR needs for deployed personnel around the world. We've brought dozens of innovative ISR solutions to the fight. These services, products, and tools directly contribute to the highest priority missions, to include: counter-Improvised Explosive Device (IED) efforts; identifying and tracking High-Value Targets; and improved battlespace awareness.

However, the most important capability we provide to the fight is our people - our on-site problem-solvers. We typically have about 70 men and women deployed into harm's way on any given day serving as liaison officers to units, providing technical expertise, or supporting those focused NRO programs. Every day, they have a direct and positive influence on combat operations and mission success, to include saving the lives of U.S. and Coalition forces.

I'll cover just a few highlights, and while the NRO's greatest successes may not be discussed in this setting, I am proud to share just a small part of what we bring to the fight. At the request of the DoD, the NRO developed and fielded the Communications External Geo-fusion System (CEGS). One of the key capabilities of the system has been to cue emitter locations in near real-time to full-motion-video operators, effectively speeding up the "find" portion of the ISR mission. The ability to combine CEGS geolocations with GEOINT has been used with great success, and has regularly contributed to enhanced battlefield awareness during combat operations, insurgent attacks, and convoy operations.

Another highly successful program has been our Tactical Defense Space Reconnaissance (TacDSR) program, which pursues highly-selective, short-term, high-impact advanced research and development efforts to integrate NRO capabilities into military platforms, combat systems, and weapons for operational warfighters. TacDSR directly answers emerging war fighting intelligence requirements of the combatant commands, DoD services, agencies, joint staffs, and other tactical

users. Since its inception, the TacDSR program has successfully transitioned more than 70 percent of all TacDSR programs to DoD users.

A real strength of the NRO is our ability to fuse multi-intelligence data to support warfighter intelligence needs. We have helped the warfighter visualize large volumes of data temporally and spatially, establishing patterns of life, identifying the unusual within a multitude of fused data sets, and integrating full motion video data with automated multi-intelligence tipping, cueing, and alerting capabilities. Our cutting-edge solutions combine GEOINT and SIGINT, and span the space, air, and ground operational domains to improve the warfighter's common operational picture and enhance his effectiveness in finding, fixing, and finishing targets.

CONCLUSION

The men and women of the NRO embody our core values of Integrity and Accountability, Teamwork Built on Respect and Diversity, and Mission Excellence. It is our highly skilled personnel who go above and beyond to execute our mission to provide "Innovative Overhead Intelligence Systems for National Security." Driven by our extraordinary people, the NRO will continue on the path of delivering acquisition and operations excellence, as well as the unparalleled innovation that is the hallmark of our history and the foundation of our future. We encourage you to continue visits to the NRO, our mission ground stations, and satellite factories for detailed discussions on how our systems directly support the national security of the United States.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for your continued support of the National Reconnaissance Office and the opportunity to appear before you today.