Aerospace Nation: Gen James Dickinson

Tue, 1/26 9:59AM • 1:01:47

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

space, command, domain, capabilities, combatant command, question, general, allies, mission, partners, terms, important, support, integrated, operations, military, orbit, air, integration, vandenberg

**SPEAKERS**

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**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 00:59

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, I'm Dave Deptula, Dean of the Mitchell Institute for aerospace studies. And welcome to our first space power forum of the new year. We're really pleased that General James Dickinson could join us today. Gen Dickinson is the commander of us Space Command, 11th and most recently established unified combatant command is responsible for conducting operations in, from, and to space. Before joining us Space Command, initially, as its deputy commander, john Dickinson served as the Commanding General of the Army space and Missile Defense Command. So welcome, General. And thanks very much for making time to join us today. I'd like to mention that it was really a pleasure having your chief of staff, Brigadier General Leonard on the forum to close out last year. So with that said, I'd like to kick things off today by giving you an opportunity to make a few opening remarks on the progress you've made to date, building out Space Command, your vision for the command, and what some of your biggest challenges and priorities are, as you look into the future. So with that, over to you.

**Gen James Dickinson** 02:11

Well, good morning. And I should say good morning from snowy and cold Colorado. We've had some snow over the last 24 hours. So I appreciate the opportunity today to get an opportunity to speak with you and General Deptula. Thank you, Dave. Thanks for that great introduction. I'm very thankful to get a chance to speak to the Aerospace Nation forum today. And I applaud your interest in exploring topics focused on the US and allied military space capabilities. Whether in this forum or in the space power series, your effort to outline the right solutions in the aerospace domain to protect our nation is exactly the kind of focus we need in today's strategic environment. So just before Christmas, you heard as Dave said, from my chief of staff, Air Force Brigadier General "Tank" Leonard, today in the aerospace forum, I'll elaborate on some of what Tank shared with you last December, and I'll also offer you some additional perspectives on where the United States Space Command is headed, and how we'll get there and why. So years ago, mostly in the days of the first US Space Command, we'd often hear about the need to integrate space into us and allied warfighting operations. Well, we've been successfully integrating space into military operations for a few decades now. I think the fact that it's not unusual today to have an Air Force fighter pilot as my command as my chief of staff, and an Army Air defenders such as myself as the Commanding General, and the Marine Corps master Gunnery Sergeant Master Master guns stalker is my command senior enlisted leader is all a pretty good indication of how we have all integrated. So it's now less than about. So now it's less about how we'll integrate space into this sister domain military operations at this point, I think that's a given. The question now is how well we'll integrate the traditional military capabilities of other domains into space warfighting operations. That will be the true test of how well collectively the US Armed Forces, executes the directives outlined in the unified command plan to protect and defend us and allied interests in space. All of this supports the logic behind a new combatant command for space. And for that matter, the rationale behind creating the sixth branch of the Armed Forces, the United States space force, the strategic environment governing us and allied engagement in space is different today. And that different environment requires a different approach. We've been laying out the evidence for this for the past couple of years now. The Mitchell Institute has hosted a number of military experts who have spoken on this theme from both the warfighting and the organized train and equip perspectives. Among them have been General Jay Ramond, Lieutenant General Stephen Whiting, Lieutenant General John shaw, who now by the way is my new deputy commander, and Major General Deanna Burt, among many others. Tank--tank Leonard last week essentially made the same case last month when he spoke with you about the differences between the new US Space Command and our predecessor combatant command. He focused primarily on the mission and the organizational changes required of the new US Space Command. Those changes are necessary to operate in today's strategic environment in order to meet the new national imperative for space. Among the most important of those differences include the fact that space is now is now acknowledged as a warfighting domain. This gives you a spacecom, a declared and defined area of responsibility that AR starts at 100 kilometers above the earth and expands into infinity. We are actually an exos terrestrial combatant command, and we operate in a physical domain every day. Additionally, this warfighting domain is growing, and this AR is by far the biggest and is getting bigger each day. So it's important to realize the significance of what operations and that Amr do for the American way of life and the American way of war. Space is fundamental to both. That's why our new mission set includes the new imperative to protect and defend us and allied interests in the domain. Those interests are under significant threat by adversaries determined to negate the advantage space brings to us adversary militarization and weaponization of space compel the Department of Defense to respond structurally organized, organizationally and functionally and we have responded. In short, we have established space warfighting capabilities to answer three mission imperatives. One, our enduring no fail mission to enable warfighting operations in other domains, to our future mission is global SATCOM manager and global sensor manager, and three, our current new mission set compelling us to fight and win in the space domain in order to protect and defend our interests there. It's this latter mission set that really defines the difference between today's us Space Command and the old us Space Command that us Space Command was almost exclusively back in the old day a supporting combatant commander. Today's us Space Command, retains those supporting functions, but is now a supported combatant command to should our fundamental objective of deterrence fail and we are called upon to fight and win in the space domain will be supported by the other combatant commands in this important task. Successful execution of that new part of our mission said requires a new way of thinking for the employment of space power, and a domain is vast and as complex as space that can be a significant challenge. It requires using the lessons of the past and new applications of baseline theories, operational concepts, and tactics, techniques and procedures. That's why it's so intriguing to be part of the Mitchell Institute forum. When discussing this issue. Your own mission statement recognizes the need sometimes to quote, question established doctrine, organizational constructs and operational concepts, asking whether there is a better way to meet desired goals. That's exactly the innovative approach needed for successful space warfighting operations. It's exactly the approach we've been taking at us Space Command. So the space domain is competitive, congested and contested. Our competitors, most notably China and Russia have militarized and weapons is this domain that requires us to proactively engaged to protect and defend our interests there. That proactive engagement must be on our terms, so that we can operate fully and freely in the domain when, where and how we need to. That, of course, is the classic definition of domain superiority. So in order to protect and defend us and allied interests in the space domain, effectively, we must retain Foster and maintain space superiority. That's not like unlike that's not unlike other domains, or that's so central to the Mitchell Institute's focus. In this example, air superiority. The concept is the same just apply to a new, complex and challenging warfighting domain. Later this week, you'll see the rollout of my commander strategic narrative, it will outline many of our concepts for how to ensure space superiority among other elements necessary for successful execution of our missions. In the meantime, I'll give you a sneak preview of what we're working on to ensure we have space superiority when and where we need it. We call these efforts my command key my command key tasks. The first is to understand our competition. Within that task, we must educate our joint warfighters on adversary threats to our space capabilities, we have to train those warfighters to outmaneuver our enemies, and we have to innovate using bold approaches like disruptive thinking. The second key task requires us to build the command to control And when you heard a bit about this task last month from tank when he described our structure using service, and functional warfighting components, all of this pushes us toward our ultimate goal of full operational capability. And it allows us to sustain a warfighting culture and adapt to a dynamic and changing strategic environment. The third key task is maintaining key relationships. The complexity of operations in the largest and most challenging warfighting environment requires us to strengthen our alliances and attract new partners. We must enhance and operability through a joint combined, and a partner approach to space warfighting operations, and we must unite around a compelling narrative focus predominantly on the concept that we work actively to retain and strengthen our space superiority. That narrative must also promote responsible behavior for Responsible behaviors and space over long periods of time, so gradually, they become international norms. Our fourth task is to maintain digital superiority. We must innovate to achieve and maintain our competitive advantage. We must evolve cyber operations in order to maintain an agile and resilient posture, and we must invest in game changing technologies to include artificial intelligence, and machine learning. Our final task is integrating commercial and interagency organizations. We have had a good start both at the National Space defense center, our joint task force space defense Operation Center at schriever. garrison and at the commercial integration cell at Vandenberg Air Force Base. This integration will help us promote responsible behaviors in space, advocate for greater space capabilities, and collaborate to solve mutual challenges with all elements of national power. All of this along with what you will see in the rest of the commander strategic narrative is designed to best posture us Space Command for providing viable space warfighting options to our national command authority. The reality is that although our gesture will always be to deter a war that begins in or extends into space, adversary behavior in the space domain could drive us to have to fight to protect and defend our interests there. So if necessary to fight and space, make no mistake, we will win. That victory will come through a joint combined and partnered approached to space warfighting operations with the United States Space Command, and the nation's other combatant commands and mutually supporting and supported rules. That inherent synergy reflects our multi domain approach to waging and winning this nation's war. It's why we stood up the new combatant command for a new warfighting domain with a new imperative to protect and defend our interests in space. United States Space Command is now well established and rapidly expanding our space warfighting capability. We are building our space warfighting culture, and we are maintaining and building us and allied space superiority, as we accelerate the development and fielding of new innovative technologies appropriate for the domain and today's strategic environment. The strategic spot, the strategic environment demands those capabilities, the United States and our allies expect that of us. And we're proud to be able to provide them today and into the future. There will never be a day without space. And today and into the future United States Space Command will be there to guarantee that. So, David, thanks for your introduction this morning. I appreciate the opportunity to provide a few comments and I look forward to your questions

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 13:37

Thanks for that context, and insight, General. And thanks very much for all that you and your team is doing. Not just to protect and defend the space domain, but to enable everything else that goes on here on Earth. So let's take a deep dive or dive a little bit deeper into some of the topics that you raised and some of the issues of the day, earlier this month. I think everybody's aware of the fact that it was announced that the Army's Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama was selected as the location for the permanent headquarters of us Space Command. Could you give us a little bit of insight into how that determination was made, as well as the process and the timeline for moving your headquarters from its provisional location in Colorado down to Huntsville.

**Gen James Dickinson** 14:29

Well, so thanks. You know, the Secretary of the Air Force made that decision to designate Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville as the preferred basing location for the permanent headquarters of the US Space Command. You know, the Secretary selected Huntsville, out of a pool of extremely strong contenders because it compared more favorably across a number of factors used to determine the best host city for our headquarters. those factors included mission, infrastructure, capacity, community sport and quite frankly cost to the Department of Defense. For now, the headquarters will remain here in Colorado Springs on a provisional basis, as outlined in the NDA. So no matter where we're located, just want to make sure I'm clear whether the decision is here in Colorado Springs or somewhere else. You know, as all good, great military organizations do, we will do what we need to do to make sure that the mission is never at Jeopardy, or a low or decrease in our capability in the space domain, whatever decision that might be made.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 15:31

Now, very good, appreciate that. Any word on timelines, you know, when you might be moving?

**Gen James Dickinson** 15:39

So you know, we have a provisional? So the short answer is not not quickly. Quite frankly, we've got a provisional headquarters decision that that that is good, if you will, for about the next five to six years. And so as you can imagine, with if the decision if the decision remains, or is Huntsville Alabama, there will be some time that we'll need in order to construct the facilities and quite frankly, modify them to fit our mission set, which is, you know, is is one that tends to be classified and, and whatnot. So we will think it'll be several years before we see that.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 16:17

No, I appreciate that. I think it gives folks in the audience a feel that it's going to be, you know, not not months, but years. So thank you. You talked about when gentle Leonard was on the forum, he mentioned how competition in space is now an everyday event, whereas it used to be more episodic, although things such as a sad weapons test tend to grab the headlines. Can you give us a sense of how competition in space with China and Russia plays out on a more day to day basis? And what are the kinds of things that spacecom are doing to tackle these growing threats?

**Gen James Dickinson** 16:58

Well, I think it's clear that the capabilities of you know our spacefaring nations have increased exponentially over the last several years. I mean, we can easily see that in the media, you've heard us talk frequently that space is, you know, congestive competitive and contested. And it's really a large, largely the value of capabilities provided by space based assets, you know, the increasing ease of access to space. And the fact that despite the vastness of space, you know, quite frankly, it becomes pretty congested. When you look at where the spacefaring nations like to use those capabilities, such as the low Earth orbit where, you know, that provides a lot of capability to to many different aspects of not only the military, but our economy. So it is a it is getting congested, and in some cases can test it so. So really, we compete daily for that domain superiority, understanding the domain, being able to understand what is happening there on a on a timely basis, you know, with us Space Command standing up, oh, gosh, about 17 months ago or so, we now have a combatant command that's looking at the space domain all the time. And as we do that, it's very important, it's very important that we we've created the command in order to do that, because we have to understand what's happening in the space domain, we do that each and every day.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 18:19

So it sounds like space, situational awareness. Is, is kind of job number one, in terms of keeping on top of on top of what the Russian Chinese are up to.

**Gen James Dickinson** 18:32

Absolutely, and, and, you know, with respect to that it's so important that we understand what we're doing. And not only from a civil space, but from a military space perspective. And that that is a that is a very large task one that requires a lot of resources and assets to be able to do that. And, and we do that each day with the great guardians and Joint Service for fighters that we have in the command.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 18:56

That's a great segue into I think something that folks would be interested in as well. Both you and the Chief of Space Operations have emphasized our partnerships with industry as significant space warfighting enablers. Are you at all concerned that we might be relying too much on warfighting capability provided by commercial enterprises?

**Gen James Dickinson** 19:19

Oh, I, I am not. I think the commercial industry gives us great flexibility, resiliency, and quite frankly, redundancy in what they're doing. I mean, if you just look at the starlink constellation that we just saw, I think they're close to maybe 1000 satellites on orbit, and technology development that goes along with some of these great commercial entities absolutely help the military in terms of building our capabilities. And so I'm not I'm not concerned about that. We've seen that in other domains to you, you David as a as a pilot. Yeah, I think I know you've seen that in the aerospace industry, in terms of how the civilian industry can complement the military efforts as well. So I think it's a great partnership, one that we have absolutely embraced. And, you know, we continue to add to our commercial integration, sell the partners that we have out in Vandenberg Air Force Base, as we speak. And that's been very encouraging. And so our ability to be able to work, you know, very closely with those commercial companies is is very important to what we do and actually is one of my part of one of my tasks and my narrative for the command.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 20:34

Yeah, it's actually a general it's a great analogy is, you know, look where we are. In, in the air domain, I mean, kind of air operations in the military have been part and parcel integrated with the civilian sector for many, many years. The same things happening with space, all one has to do is, you know, look at that SpaceX launch this last Sunday that put up 143 or 140 plus satellites, pretty impressive. And I think that, like you say, I'll just get stronger, but it's not like the military is absolutely dependent. They're a partner. And so you capitalize on them where you can. Now in your opening remarks, you referenced the commands imperative of Being Well, posed to act decisively in the event that deterrence fails. And obviously, any discussion of our offensive space warfighting capability is necessarily classified. But what else can you do? Or are you able? Are you are you out there acting decisively? What What can you do in that regard in response to aggression, adversary aggression in space?

**Gen James Dickinson** 21:50

Well, I think maybe if I just go back a month, when we we watched the Russian satellite test, you know, the, what, what's different from 18 1718 months ago was, we noticed that we weren't necessarily discussing those types of activities, you know, in the, in the, in the open forum. And, and so one of the, one of the skills or one of the competencies within this command right now is our strategic messaging capability, and our ability to hold folks accountable for their behaviors in the space domain. And that's really come to be over the last 1718 months. In terms I've we've got two or three examples of that, that you're probably well aware of that have been in the media where we have come out and talked about the Russians and what they've done. on orbit, we even talk a little bit about what the Iranians did on orbit here not too long ago, I think general Raymond, at the time, was quoted as a tumbling webcam was what he put out. So what we're doing each and every day is, is watching, observing, interpreting, understanding what they're doing, and then holding folks accountable for their behaviors. And in the space domain with the ultimate goal is that we have responsible behaviors in the space domain. I think I mentioned that earlier in my remarks, as we look to the future. And so that's that's, you know, if I was to pick one thing and highlight it, it would be our ability to do that.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 23:18

I think that leads right into reinforces what you were talking about earlier about establishing norms in space. And by making sure people are aware of what Chinese Russians Iranians are doing up there helps to promote the fact that, you know, if we want peace in space, and you got to act in that manner, as well. A little bit different topic. During the organization stand up a space calm, like all unified combatant commanders, you have service components that provide capabilities that you match to meet the needs of your particular circumstances. Every every service has one except the Air Force right now. To your knowledge, will the Air Force independently of spaceforce be providing a component to us space come in the not too distant future?

**Gen James Dickinson** 24:19

That's my hope. I think I think we will, we were working closely with General Brown and his folks on a component to the United States Space Command because there are some mission sets that I have within the command that that will require us to be able to leverage a Air Force component to the command and we're, we're excited that we have the other other services represented in here. I mean, I think our latest was our Mar four space. Major General glave. He is the commander for that. And so now as we you know, as it's exciting as you stand up a command, you get more assets that become part of the command that really provides you a lot of combat capability. expertise. And so we're looking forward to that. I can't give you a timing on when that decision might be made. But I think General Brown is considering it right now.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 25:08

That's great to hear that at your change of command ceremony General, you noted that your focus would be on developing, nurturing, and embracing a space warfighting culture. In your mind. What are some of the key tenants of just what that warfighting culture is? And what have been some of your main lines of efforts in cultivating this mindset at spacecom?

**Gen James Dickinson** 25:35

Well, I appreciate the fact that you keep you look, you listen to my chain of command speech, that's great. But yeah, so you know, developing and fostering and sustaining a warfighting culture within the command, I'll just step back for a minute and talk about kind of what how the command is built, and how it's comprised. And so we look like the other combatant commands from a joint perspective. But what what sticks out to me after I took command of this great organization is the fact that As to be expected, we've got a good foundation of space expertise, both from then the Air Force, now the space force then on, in addition to that, we've got the army Space Operations officers, which we call the FA 40s. And though that really comprises kind of that technical expertise that you need, and of course, we can all understand how complex the space domain is. But with that, we've got a great joint team, from the from the Air Force, the army Marines. Now the guardians of the space force. And what that brings with the folks that comprise that, of course, you had tank, so we know he's an F 16, f 35. pilot, I mentioned master guns, who's a a marine. And then I've got a j five, who's a Submariner has been spent years underwater, undersea, and could go on and on about all the different types of talent and expert expertise, and more importantly, their operational experience that they bring to the command. And you put all that together, you blend all that together. And what we find is, we find that as we stand up the command with new processes and procedures, we have folks that are relying upon years of experience in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, on how we do land, sea and air operations. And those domains are able to bring that expertise from planning to etc, etc, into the command, what that generates is combat power almost immediately. And so as we, as I mentioned earlier, kind of on some of the things that we have done publicly with our messaging, a lot of that is a result of taking tried and true joint processes in those theatres of war for many, many years, bringing that in adding the space expertise to it, and we're able to move quickly with respect to that. So the job one is making sure that we maintain and continue to attract that type of talent, so that we can continue on our path in terms of becoming a fully operational combatant command. And so really, you know, the tenets, if you will, of that is how do you continue to breed that level of warfighting focus within the command, and I'm confident we can do it. You know, as we, it's great when you have folks that come into a new command that have a different perspective and kind of question norms, and aren't afraid to part of my command philosophy is always be able to tell me what you think, honestly. And so I have no trouble with that in this command there. I've got a lot of folks that are willing to tell me honestly, what they think we take those and we make the adjustments accordingly. So as a new combatant command, the good news is that that we don't have we are developing our processes and procedures and, and we've got a great team that helps me to do that.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 28:42

That's great. And I think that the examples that you gave, of people who have been out there in the warfighter in different domains, bringing them all together, will really support your goal and objective of introducing a combatant focus to the command. Now, one of the things that you said in your opening remarks, I want to expand just a little bit on in essence, the key difference between the Space Command of today versus its previous iteration, is that you now have a defined area of responsibility, and that not only are you just supporting, but you're also going to be a supported combatant command that touches on every other combatant command on a daily basis. Could you talk just a little bit on how spacecom is working to coordinate and integrate its efforts with the other cocoms?

**Gen James Dickinson** 29:35

Well, absolutely. And that's that is a critical, critical function that we're doing right now. So the Space Command of old I mentioned in my remarks, a supporting command to the other combatant commands, meaning that we provide the the space missionaries or services that we have for years and years satellite communications, GPS, for example. We continue to do that and when tank talk to you I'm not Not sure if he kind of divided, divided the command up and who does what within the command underneath me in terms of our functional components, but that that capability resides with Deanna Burt. out at Vandenberg. What's different is that we're we're looking at on orbit activities and doing our protect and defend mission that is carried out by the JTF space defense commanded by Brigadier General Tom James. And so in that particular mission area, as you can imagine, there'll be opportunities or there'll be circumstances where we will rely on other combatant commands that have capabilities or assets within their area of operation that we will need in order or depend upon in order to do our mission on orbit. So kind of unique in a supporting supportive role. That's essentially what's different between the old Space Command and the new Space Command. And our role in doing that those missions is dependent on our integration within each of the respective combatant commands. And we do that right now through the stand up of what we call the integrated planning elements. And these are elements led by in general, an O6 of various branches, in those respective combatant commands. And what they do is they provide that integration, space planning, integration, and operations in in both a supporting and supported role within each of those combatant commands. And so that's an important relationship, we continue to grow and mature, we don't have, you know, we're in the process of making sure each other to each of the 10 command commands have that respective element. But we've got about seven of those right now that are stood up and functioning.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 31:41

Very good a bit of a follow up. The space domain consists of a not just assets on orbit, but also terrestrial ground, say stations and the links between them. On that point, when Chuck beams was on this forum, he highlighted how cyber attacks pose one of the greatest threats to orbiting satellites. Could you elaborate a bit on your efforts with Cyber Command to defend against these kinds of attacks?

**Gen James Dickinson** 32:07

Yes. So my relationship with Paul Nakasone cybercom commander is, is very important and very good. I've known Paul for many years. But what we each do in our respective domains, if you will, are connected, yeah, very connected. And our ability to to protect our capabilities both on orbit and on land on a terrestrial remote, his role is very important in it. Likewise, as we have elements, integrated planning elements and the other combatant commands to include cybercom, they in turn cybercom have integrated planning elements that are embedded in my organization as well. So as we, as we mature, you know, cybersecurity, digital superiority is very important to what we do each and every day both both, as you said, on the ground terrestrial as well as in the space. So we we have a good relationship now we continue to grow that relationship, and we continue to grow capability and capacity in that regard.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 33:06

Excellent. Now, space domain awareness, as we alluded to just a minute ago, is an area of increasing focus, and space comms currently responsible for space traffic management. But some of those responsibilities are in the process of being transferred to the Commerce Department. Could you tell us a bit about what the impetus behind this decision was? And how do you envision space comms partnership with the Commerce Department moving forward?

**Gen James Dickinson** 33:32

Well, relationship I can tell you right now is very close. We've worked over the last couple years very closely with the Department of Commerce. And we even have a few folks that are out at Vandenberg right now, working with Deanna Burt. So relationship is good. I think the way I would categorize that or talk about that is, as I mentioned earlier, you know, the orbital regimes are becoming much more congested. And not all, of course, not all of its military, most of it is either space debris or commercial activity. And as we look to the future, that's only going to get more. And so a very similar analogy might be the air domain. And so right now, you know, we're the ones, the military aerospace command, we're responsible for kind of the tracking of all those objects and the ability to deconflict the ability to report those types of activities. Those will continue in the future, although expanding exponentially, if you will. And so decision has to be made, and I think it has already been made. Is that really a military type of function? Or is that more of a, you know, inherently governmental, in terms of non military. So if you look at the air domain, for example, and you look at the FAA, they're responsible for air traffic control. However, the military still has a piece of that in terms of your air battle management responsibilities is very similar, I think in the space domain. So we have a space domain awareness function, we at US Space Command. And that that entails not only understanding the environment, but you know, looking at from a military perspective. Whereas if the department of commerce when they they stand up and take over those responsibilities will perform those responsibilities very similarly to what the FAA does today, which is to make sure that we have a safe and responsible environment where commerce can take place, companies, private companies, and countries can operate their satellites, constellations in a safe and professional manner. But it's it's one of those areas that's just exponentially growing. And it gets to the point where, you know, it's a resource type of activity and when it should, and I feel it should eventually transfer over to the Department of Commerce where it can be better managed, and then we use Space Command can be focused on the matters at hand that I've been charged to do

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 35:59

is great. It's great analogy, by the way with FAA, I think it helps our audience understand just kind of the relationship that you're embarking upon. Now another one of the things that you mentioned in your opening remarks was us spaceforce, joining the intel community as its 18th member, or Forgive me, that might have been general Raman. But the fact of the matter is that they recently stood up a commercial space council to explore how to better use data from commercial space with its own systems and help get Intel out to end users to space calm have a role in this new body. And more broadly, how are you leveraging commercial space capabilities through your commercial integration? So?

**Gen James Dickinson** 36:49

Well, certainly so yes, I mean, that that was a big, it was a big milestone to have that orfs Intel organization stood up, I think that you mentioned that Jay talked about that. That is a huge for us, as a quite frankly, a consumer of that intelligence and those those products. So we're, we're excited about that. We, as I mentioned, we leveraged our commercial integration sell out of Vandenberg quite often. I mean, when you look at everything, from satellite communications to other types of functions, it's important that we have that relationship. And as we look to the future in terms of building resiliency and redundancy, those types of capabilities will certainly look to the to the commercial entities to help us with that.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 37:34

Excellent. Now, last August spacecom, put out a year in review video. One of the things that featured prominently, and it was multinational space collaboration, through efforts such as operational Olympic defender, signing space, situational awareness, sharing agreements, combined Space Operations Center, and so on and so forth. What's the significance of fostering greater cooperation with America's partners and allies in space and looking to the future? How space come looking to build on these efforts?

**Gen James Dickinson** 38:10

Well, that's a great question. And again, that that is part of my key tasks. In my my new narrative envision, and has always been, you know, very important. We We aren't just starting out with, you know, establishing relationships with our partners and allies in space that has been going on for years. And so we are continuing to work with allies that we currently have and building a strong relationship. We we have numerous forums where we interact with them. What comes to mind, we had the Sisco couple weeks ago, we had schriever wargames, not too long ago, where we we have very productive dialogue with our partners, on on very similar things that we just talked about in terms of norms of behavior, and capability development will continue to foster those, I'll tell you what we're doing here in our headquarters right now. And my headquarters at us Space Command is we're fostering the same thing. So a lot of those a lot of our partners in the past and currently are out in Vandenberg. But we're looking very closely at expanding that into my headquarters here, because it is so important that we go in with our partners and allies. And again, if I draw an analogy to other domains that I've had experience in, it's it's similar to that. It's the the it's the synergy of our partners and allies that really give us the combat advantage. And we've seen that in multiple conflicts and wars. So if it weren't for for those, those partnerships and relationships, we wouldn't be as successful as we've been in the past and we looked at that for the same way in the space domain.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 39:42

Now, spacecom is featured prominently in the early ABMS onramp demonstrations in support of the JADC2 concept. What are some of your takeaways from those demonstrations general and both in terms of what works well and and also what can be improved. The in the future?

**Gen James Dickinson** 40:02

Yeah. So I would tell you that I'm really, you know, at my core as a joint combatant commander, I'm really kind of platform agnostic. So, you know, I do have from time to time, you know, people ask me very pointed questions, do you like this specific type of asset to do that function. And so, you know, I am a, I absolutely support the JADC2 concept, join all domain command and control how we get there. I'm kind of agnostic, but I will tell you that it's absolutely important that we are able to share data, share situational awareness, share information, amongst all the different types of capabilities we have with there's a sensor, a C2 element, it's important that we're fused, and we're able to share that authoritative type of data back and forth. And as I described, for example, the space domain awareness and you know, the numbers of objects, the 1000s, and 1000s of objects that we have on orbit as we speak, we have to be able to understand, you know, what the what that means to us from not only a warfighting perspective, but also from a civil perspective and the dangers that that could provide if not properly tracked, recorded and reported. And so I'm in favor, I think the JADC2 is a great concept we need to get there as quickly as we can. I personally think that it's it's not that far in the future. But for what I do each and every day in the space warfighting domain, I have got to be able to, to have that data that's available to me, and not only have the data have the tools, whether it's AI or machine learning, that actually helps me understand what's important to me.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 41:43

You bet. And obviously, protection, those critical links in space is something that's just gonna be fundamental to the whole JADC2 concept as we as we move forward. One of the other things that's of interest, I know, to folks in the community or an interested in what's going on in in space. Is it keeping us force posture, mobile and flexible, is crucial to keeping one step ahead of adversary planning, something that we've seen other services exercise in various ways are all the services. How can the United States bring that operational Lydian space, while at the same time, ensuring space or safe space traffic awareness?

**Gen James Dickinson** 42:33

So I think your first part day was how do we get that data to the shooter the quickest? Yeah. So I think, actually, I think there's there's a lot of innovation and work that's being done on that. I know from my, my service, the army. I know, we've spent in my former job at smdc. That there's been there's, as we speak, a lot of work going on with that type of capabilities. How fast can you get sensor to shooter data passed up and down the chain. And of course, that's pretty daunting when you look at the 1000s and 1000s of miles in the different domains that information has to trance transit through in order to give that capability to in this example, a Warfighter on the in the land domain. So I think we're making good strides in that. Are we there yet? No. But I think I'm encouraged by how, how we're looking at that and how we're moving out in that regard. Now, appreciate it.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 43:29

The other part of my question was the whole issue of unpredictability, you know, that allows any Warfighter to keep ahead of an adversary. But how do you achieve unpredictability in space? While at the same time, we've got to make sure that everyone's aware of what's going on with the different platforms and deconflict them or space traffic awareness? Okay, that's

**Gen James Dickinson** 43:55

great question. So my attempt to satisfy your satisfy you with my answer that would be I think that's very similar in other domains. So when I talked about space domain awareness, and we talked about space traffic management space domain awareness is that ability, what you just said, is to understand what's going on make sure that people that need to know that know that and make sure that people that don't need to know that don't know that. I think that's the art of space domain awareness and how we take that concept to empower whether we're doing on orbit, protect and defend missions, or whether we're facility a, a soldier marine on the ground, a sailor at sea or an airman in the air.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 44:39

Yeah, no, that's great. I think you're throughout this discussion. You use the analogies in a really excellent fashion and it helps folks who are not in the space business. grasp what it is that you're that you're trying to do. One last question for you before we Move on to our audience questions. And that's Do you anticipate any changes to the command structures or functions? following last week's change in presidential administrations?

**Gen James Dickinson** 45:15

I would tell you that I I don't think so. I mean, I can speak for us Space Command, I would say that, I think it's a, if you look back over the last 17-18 months since we've been established, or re established, I should say, and what we've accomplished in terms of holding, holding our competitors accountable for their activities in the space domain. I think that's clear. I think that becomes more clear to to our leadership, how the importance of us Space Command, you know, one of my mentors and former bosses general heighten would always say when he was us, stratcom commander that when he was us, stratcom, Commander space was on about number three on his priority list every day, he came into work, and for a very logical and good reason. I'll tell you, it's my number one priority every day, all day, at night, whether it's snowing here in Colorado, like it is today, or wherever it is the number one priority for this command. And I think we're seeing the benefit of this command all albeit we're not completely stood up yet. I would just say in the in the early stages, and I consider that about 17 or 18 months, like I've talked about, we have already demonstrated our combat capability and our value to the Department of Defense in the United States.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 46:33

Now, what a great way to, to end up this sequence of discussions. And it's exactly why we needed to have stood up a combatant command for space because it is on your mind each and every dance priority number one. So john Dickinson, thanks very much for your insightful comments and sharing your valuable perspectives as he tackled his Brave New Space Command venture. Now, as a as alerted to our listeners, our next event is next Thursday, February 4, when I'll be having a discussion with the commander of Air Force Research Lab, Brigadier General Heather Pringles, so we hope you can all join us for that. All right, we're now going to open this session to questions from the audience to folks who have been listening. And those of you who are interested in asking a question, please use the raise hand function, when I call on you. Please state your name and the organization that you are with. So let's start with Teresa Hitchens.

**Theresa Hitchens** 47:34

Hi, this is Teresa Hitchens from breaking defense. Thank you for doing this. I wanted to ask you about the allies and the potential for the representation. As mentioned that actually back in November, because I wrote about it. And I just wondered if you had a timeframe for that happening? And that's a clarifying question. And And related to that. I also wondered how you are working with allies or how you are working with your counterparts at God and elsewhere, to actually develop norms of behavior, because Up to now, the US military has really not articulated what it considers good behavior or bad behavior or negative behavior, what it considers the right norms to be for military activities in space. And so I wanted to ask how you're stepping that up? Or how you're working to define those things. Thank you.

**Gen James Dickinson** 48:31

Well, thank you for the question. And so how are we working with our allies and partners? I think what you asked was the timeline. So I will tell you, we're working with them right now. And we are, we are in discussions with them as recently as a couple weeks ago, in terms of how we can increase that presence here in US Space Command, as well as throughout the command. So we're working aggressively on that in terms of working with each of the each of our allies and partners in terms of if they were be interested in and being here in Colorado Springs, where I am today in terms of working hand in hand with some of our primary staff on our plans and operations. So we're working working that right now at this level. And as I mentioned earlier, you know, we're very mature in that regard out at Vandenberg at the combine Force base component command where h gentle Bert works right or commands right now. And so we've got a good we've got, you know, a lot of participation with an integration with our allies and partners out there. But my goal is to increase that as quickly as I can here at the headquarters, you'll find them somewhat of an impatient person, I like to move out and be in these particular areas. And, and the good news is, there's nothing but like great dialogue and acceptance of that when I do have those discussions. As far as the norms and behaviors. You know, that's a that's a great question. That's a complicated question, because that doesn't just necessarily involve the Department of Defense with how we categorize that, of course, a lot of that will have to do with the whole government and how they perceive that, as we have seen in other domains, as, as Dave pointed out, you know, I'm quick to draw an analogy to another domain. And I do that on purpose, because I think that makes it easier for people to understand or relate to what we're trying to do. So you know, I've got a great Submariner, that works for me as my J. Five. And he's often he often we often have discussions where we we apply the maritime model to what we're trying to do in space in terms of So how long did it take for us to establish those types of things you described in terms of norms of behavior and space? Well, how long did it take us to establish norms of behavior, or standards within the maritime domain? The answer to that is it takes time. And it is a whole government approach. So now, we're obviously just one piece of that. But when you talk about norms of behavior, responsible behavior, and things like that, you can simply turn to some of the messaging that that I did as recently as a month or so ago, when the Russians demonstrated that capability, or try to test that capability. And, and so that's through that particular Avenue, you can kind of deduce or see what we consider norms of behavior. But it's going to take some while It'll take a while and, and it'll be more of a whole government approach.

**Theresa Hitchens** 51:23

Thank you.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 51:25

Alright, next, let's turn to Tom Goffus. Tom, I don't know.

**Tom Goffus** 51:38

Sorry about that. General Dickinson, thanks for doing this--General Deptula, this has been a great review of an emerging field is very important on the hill. Tom Goff is from the Senate Armed Services Committee. And I'd like to start with holistically how to approach the space domain, similar to how folks talked about air as an extension of the ground domain during Billy Mitchell's time, there are similar ideas about space as an extension of the air domain. So holistically, how do you see the space domain are the independent as well as interdependent warfighting domains? And number two, how is Space Command approaching space as a standalone warfighting domain? Thank you, sir.

**Gen James Dickinson** 52:20

Okay, so a great question. So I will tell you that my thought is that there are integrated. So I think you just look at where, you know, my eo are just defined to begin. And, and you can see, even at that, even at that altitude, there's air, air equities there as well. So I think it's at least at that level, and I'm talking probably, you know, my words, Leo, and it's going to be an integrated integration between the air domain and the space domain, it just has to be beyond that. I think, you know, that's going to be fairly pure space. But it is it is one of those areas, as I mentioned earlier, that requires close coordination, integration amongst the other services, the other domains, and the other combatant commands. And we're working towards that each and every day. But when I discussed the supporting and supported, I think that's probably a good way to look at that in terms of our support to the domains, the geographic the air, land and sea domains, cyber domain, and then their support to us in the space domain.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 53:31

Thanks, sir. All right. Let's go to Rachel Cohen. Rachel, you need to unmute.

**Rachel Cohen** 53:44

I do. I'm sorry. Thank you for doing this. I have another allies and partners kind of question for you. You know, General heighten was talking a little bit about this the other day? You know, I'm curious. When you talk to partner and ally countries about working together in space, what do what do they want from the US? And what do what do we want them to contribute? You know, he was talking about it sort of in the way that you know, the US, lets other countries fly the F 35. Right. So what what is sort of the space equivalent that we're working toward? In that regard? You know, what, what roles and missions kind of shake up or, you know, kind of kind of division are you looking at?

**Gen James Dickinson** 54:26

Well, thanks for the question. So you know that that's a very important part of the the warfighting perspective of the command. So, as I mentioned earlier, we were not just starting out on our our integration and our relationship with our allies and partners. We've had that for many years. If you look at the integration that we have with our allies and partners in our SATCOM enterprise, if you will, our integration with our allies and partners in our missile warning. missionaries, so we've had them and then we've also had them integrated on our operations. For, for many years. So as we look to the future, you know, it's like we see, again, as we see in other domains, that we will look for their capabilities, their respective capabilities that they are building the capacity and capabilities that they're building, whether it's on the ground or on orbit or both. And we will look to those to see how we can integrate those into our our operations that we support, whether that's operations in the space domain, or whether that's operations, and air, land or sea domains. So that that is kind of what we go back to look at is, we all have expertise and capabilities, and how best can we bring those from each of our respective allies and partners together to build combat capability?

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 55:51

Okay, very good. Let's turn to Sandra Irwin.

**Sandra Erwin** 55:56

Good morning and gentle Dickinson, thank you for taking my question. A few weeks ago, we heard from generally a lot our back because the director of the space force intelligence and she was talking about there's a need for capabilities to characterize threats to have confidence in the, in the in the information that you see in orbit. So I was just wondering if if you've had conversations with that side of the house. And if you foresee God making investments in these new capabilities for characterizing threats and getting getting more accurate intelligence from space. Thank you.

**Gen James Dickinson** 56:37

Great. So I had the honor of working with Leah when she was out here as the J two before she moved on to the space force. And, and the good news is she's at spaceforce doing doing some great work. And then I've got a brand new, not a brand new but a new j two and behind her Greg gagnant. And one of the I think one of the strengths of the command right now. And one of the successes is how quickly we've been able to build our intelligence capability within us Space Command, and absolutely critical that we have those processes and procedures in place to where we can better understand the activities on orbit. I mean, as we look, we talked a little bit about space domain awareness, you know, our ability to characterize on orbit activities, be able to understand what they are, and more important understand if we have to take any action or, or what are those types of things or is absolutely critical. So I couldn't agree more. I mean, I think having I think the I think they're the 18th organization within the Intel enterprise now is critical and demonstrates the importance of space to the Department of Defense and the whole thing and the government and in general. And so I support that, you know, the capabilities that we build are in order to do that are critical to what we do as a Warfighter just as we do, for example, and the other domains. So whether it's missile defense, whether it's air to air combat, whether it's combat on the sea, the ability to characterize and understand what is happening in the environment you're working in, is important. And the Intel is obviously a huge piece of that.

**Sandra Erwin** 58:15

Thank you very much.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 58:17

All right, how about let's go to Dong hyung. Kim,

**Donghyun Kim** 58:23

thank you for taking the question. This is Donghyun Kim report from Voice of America Korean service. Last week, Secretary Austin in his Senate confirmation hearing mentioned in his vast policy question that space related threats from Iran and North Korea, such as jamming of satellite is growing. Also, he mentioned about space lots capability turning into a ballistic technology related, how is spacecom addressing such secondary threat besides China and Russia? Thank you.

**Gen James Dickinson** 58:55

I'm sorry, what was the last part of that question,

**Donghyun Kim** 58:57

please? Ah, how is spacecom addressing such secondary threat besides China and Russia, in particular, North Korea?

**Gen James Dickinson** 59:09

Okay, so well, thanks for the question. I think what we're doing right now, or what we're doing right now is, you know, watching them very closely in terms of what they're doing. For the on orbit, of course, I've read the I saw, Secretary Austin's response to those advanced policy questions, and I listened to his testimony as well. And so that I agree that you know, some of that activity could translate into missile defense or missile defense into space, or missile technologies into space. So we here at us Space Command, you know, we watch that very closely in terms of what that means to us, both from our terrestrial or supporting roles to the warfighters on the ground, air and sea as well as what that could mean in the space domain.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 59:59

All right, last question. For your general from John Harper,

**John Harper** 1:00:06

at thanks for doing this general at John Harper with national defense magazine, when do you anticipate that space comm will reach full operational capability? Do you have a timeline for that? And what are your criteria for declaring FOC?

**Gen James Dickinson** 1:00:21

Well, so that's a great question. And you know, when you say great question usually means I'm not going to give you a specific answer. Right. So now just to answer your question, so it's a function of many things. So I would tell you, in general, it's conditions based, that will declare full operational capability. And what goes into that condition will be a lot of things, personnel, number of people, number of the right kinds of personnel that come to the command with the right skills and the talent. And then there will be a material piece to that in terms of capability, whether it's command or control, or other types of capability that allow me to do my UCP missions that have been given by the President. And so it's, there's no date, time, month, year right now, because we're working through that right now, in terms of what that will mean. But that's generally what we'll use in order to declare a full operational capability.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 1:01:22

Okay, folks, we've come to the end of this space power forum on aerospace nation. A big thanks again to general Dickinson, to you, General and to our audience, from all of us here at the Mitchell Institute. Have a great aerospace power kind of day.

**Gen James Dickinson** 1:01:41

Thank you very much. It was a pleasure.

**Lt Gen (Ret.) Dave Deptula** 1:01:43

You bet. Best of luck.

**Gen James Dickinson** 1:01:44

Thank you.