



Space Force - Frequently Asked Questions

Reoptimizing for Great Power Competition Overview

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Q. Why do you say we are out of time?

A. The threat is here now. We should have taken these steps years ago.

Q. Why is the Department of the Air Force Reoptimizing for Great Power Competition?

A. The Department of the Air Force is facing a significant, dangerous shift in the strategic security environment. The DAF has historically adapted to key inflection points to best compete in emerging security landscapes. As we confront this new strategic environment, we must do what we have always done in moments like this: change. We must reoptimize to pivot from supporting post-9/11 conflicts and demands to deterring, and if necessary, winning, conflicts in an era of Great Power Competition. We are out of time.

Q. How is the Department planning to go about this effort?

A. The Department of the Air Force senior leadership team led a broad review of all aspects of how the DAF performed its basic missions to organize, train and equip the units and capabilities we provide to the Combatant Commanders and the Joint Force. This effort was initiated with kick-off meetings of the Secretariat, Air Force, and Space Force staffs in September 2023. Key decisions have been made. The next step is detailed planning and execution.

Q. Are you saying you aren't ready for conflict right now?

A. We are ready today, but deterrence is not assured and we must be prepared for conflict. To strengthen our deterrence and ensure we are as prepared as possible to fight and win should deterrence fail, we need to continue to adapt to the threat and the competitive environment we are now experiencing.

Q. Do you think this is more about reorganization?

A. It's about more than organizational structure. If "form follows function," and we recognize the strategic environment demands the DAF perform its functions differently, then we can't cling to the old "form" and expect the same degree of success we enjoyed in prior strategic environments. Our organizations must adapt urgently to the new reality. It's also about how we train people, what kind of skill sets we want to have, and what that mix of skill sets is. We're looking at how we fight and how units are structured, particularly CONUS units that are going to be called upon to go forward and fight with short notice. Units already in theater have a combat mission and are structured to do that mission; they practice it—but one of the key things we're trying to do against peer competitors is Agile Combat Employment (ACE). Deploying units must be ready to implement ACE on arrival and under fire. It's also about how we assess and evaluate readiness and how we create readiness.

Q. When will decisions from this reoptimization process be implemented?

A. We plan to implement decisions as soon as possible. Implementation plans are being developed by the leaders for each decision. Each of the decisions will be implemented in parallel, on different timelines.

Q. What resources will the DAF be requesting to implement these changes? Will there be funding requested within the FY25 President's Budget? What funding will be included in POM '26, '27, and/or '28?

A. Teams are building roadmaps for how we will implement these changes right now. The Secretary of the Air Force has made clear we are out of time and must reoptimize now. Reoptimizing for Great Power Competition does not change our FY24 or FY25 budget requests. The DAF will work within funding

flexibilities Congress has provided to implement near-term actions, although reprogramming actions are possible. We anticipate any significant budgetary impacts to be seen in the FY26 budget.

Q. This seems like a heavy lift and raises concerns the DAF will further sacrifice current readiness for future modernization. How much additional risk will the Air Force and/or Space Force need to assume in the near-term to achieve this reorganization? What are the associated offsets?

A. The tension between improving today's readiness and investing enough to create meaningful advantages in future fights is a key consideration for this entire effort. We believe these changes are necessary. They will allow us to be more ready now and improve over time as we prioritize investments for both new capabilities and the current force.

Q. How do these changes complement and integrate with other modernization initiatives, including DAF Operational Imperatives and future force design? What actions are you taking to prevent unnecessary duplication and overlap between these efforts, particularly when it comes to resourcing?

A. The Reoptimizing for Great Power Competition effort should emphasize how we are urgently addressing both our current structure and continuous capability development. The Operational Imperatives focused on identifying and prioritizing modernization investments.

Q. Will these decisions create changes to basing/missions?

A. We will work to minimize basing changes, but some will be necessary. We don't intend to move any existing headquarters. We expect the existing Institutional and Service Component Commands and their current commanders to retain their current leadership footprint (3 or 4 star) and remain at their current locations. For the new commands, the Department of the Air Force is beginning the process to determine the best locations for their permanent locations. Avoiding disruption will be a consideration.

Q. Will individuals be redistributed among bases? Will commanders and/or chain of commands change?

A. Initially, we expect most individuals will not be relocated, rather, the majority of personnel changes will include in-place realignment or matrixing individuals to different organizations or commands. As for timing and additional details, we are currently building implementation plans and will share more information as it becomes available.

Q. What are the new offices you are creating within the Department of the Air Force and what will they be responsible for?

A. The Department of the Air Force is creating three new offices within the DAF Secretariat to increase cohesion and integration to inform enterprise capability development, resource prioritization, and investments supporting strategic competition. The DAF will establish the below:

1. Integrated Capabilities Office– identifies and pursues integrated capability development supporting the DAF's most critical and operational needs (like the OIs).
2. Office of Competitive Activities – focuses on maintaining competitive advantages across the continuum of competition for the DAF and will work with OSD, the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands and other US government activities.
3. Program Assessment and Evaluation Office within SAF/FM– enables the DAF resourcing prioritization, effects enterprise risk management, and develops resourcing and trade space options for the Department.

Q. How many Airmen and Guardians were directly involved in the reoptimization effort?

A. Over 1,500 Airmen and Guardians, to include active duty, civilians, contractors, and joint planners from all Air Force MAJCOMs, Space Force FLDCOMs, and CCMD service components were involved in this

effort. This ensured the developed solutions reflect the needs and realities of every corner of the DAF. Each command had representatives embedded within working groups. They participated in tabletop exercises (TTXs), simulating real-world scenarios to test and refine the proposed changes.

Develop People

Q. How does the Space Force plan to develop its Guardians to reoptimize for Great Power Competition?

A. The Space Force will prepare leaders for modern warfare, to include redesigning career paths for both officer and enlisted and increasing educational opportunities to provide the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to meet the high-tech demands of space operations.

The Space Force will also increase the number of opportunities for specialized technical education and development (i.e., formal STEM education, education with industry, etc.).

We will also establish an integrated Officer Training Course (OTC) for all new officer accessions to develop a shared joint warfighter mindset and culture. This course will merge three initial skills training courses (i.e., cyber, intelligence, and space operations).

Starting in 2025, the Space Force will expand its breadth of educational opportunities via new formal education pathways and expanded engagement with technically relevant industries for officer, enlisted, and civilian personnel. The Space Force has already expanded advanced academic degree opportunities for Guardians and will relook at the enlisted noncommissioned officer professional military education requirements to ensure the right leadership training at each rank level. Civilian Guardians will continue to leverage expanded USAF civilian developmental education opportunities.

Q. Why is the Space Force creating a new Officer Training Course?

A. To successfully reoptimize for Great Power Competition, we must develop leaders with comprehensive knowledge of the space domain. This new course provides a foundation of all space requirements for all officers to be effective in their first assignment, as well as provide breadth of experience to support future career development. All Guardians must be trained as joint-minded warfighters who understand both the battlefield context of the space domain as well as their ability to act within it.

Q. Who will attend the new Space Force Officer Training Course?

A. All new officer accessions from the Reserve Officer Training Corps, United States Air Force Academy, and Officer Training School will attend the multi-disciplinary OTC.

Q. Where will the new Officer Training Course be located?

A. The location of OTC is still being determined, but we intend to take advantage of pre-existing locations and virtual training options.

Q. What will the new Officer Training Course cost?

A. At this time, the stand up of OTC will be done within existing resources. Any additional costs will be built into the FY26 or later budget cycle.

Q. How does acquisition expertise fit into this new model for officer development?

A. An operational foundation will provide a common basis for our acquisition corps, enabling them a better understanding of the needs their systems must support.

Q. What about Enlisted and Civilian Guardians?

A. While the Officer Training Course directly impacts Officer Guardians, that is only one element of this initiative. The Space Force is reexamining career paths for all its personnel, including Civilian and Enlisted Guardians. Consistent with our vision for the distinct roles of Officers, Enlisted, and Civilian Guardians, we will expand academic and developmental opportunities, and we will strive to align individual skills with Service needs in such a way as to maximize the impact of our members.

Q. Will there be more opportunities to pursue education at civilian institutions?

A. Yes, as USSF continues to build its talent development processes, these opportunities will also grow. For example, from 2023 to 2024, the Space Force sponsored a 373% increase in advanced academic degree programs at civilian institutions, increasing from 11 slots to 52.

Q. Is the Space Force going to implement warrant officers?

A. Not at this time. Considering the Service's small size and the highly technical nature of our work, we do not believe that the introduction of Warrant Officers would be beneficial either to the Service or to its members. Instead, the Space Force will focus on building career paths around technical expertise, especially for our Enlisted Guardians. Moreover, we are investigating our options to incentivize and retain all our highly skilled Guardians and not just the select few that we might otherwise be able to nominate as Warrant Officers.

Generate Readiness

Q. How will the Space Force reoptimize generating readiness?

A. First, the Space Force is redesigning readiness standards to meet the demands of Great Power Competition, orienting readiness toward contested battlefield conditions rather than a benign peacetime environment.

Second, we are increasing the scope, tempo, and realism of operational assessments and exercises. This will involve developing a data-driven process to assess our readiness against a thinking adversary in the current strategic environment, and building a series of nested exercises that increase in scope and complexity to fit within a broader Department of the Air Force framework.

Q. What readiness requirements are the Space Force redesigning to meet the demands of Great Power Competition?

A. The readiness requirements for employed-in-place space forces are different than for expeditionary forces. The Space Force will redesign readiness metrics and standards to measure the proficiency needed to prevail against a capable, thinking enemy in a contested environment; the status and risk level of system software and hardware maintenance; and the resiliency of support infrastructure essential to mission success.

Q. How will this impact the budget?

A. New readiness and training standards will allow the Space Force to better quantify our capabilities, readiness, and needs throughout the budget cycle. We will implement these changes by first reprioritizing existing resources. Any additional requirements will be built into the FY26 or later budget cycles.

Q. How will these changes differ from the current set of exercises?

A. Today's exercises are often small-scale without aligned desired learning objectives that allow tactical outcomes to impact the strategic level. The USSF will execute multiple exercises at all levels, nesting and linking threat-aligned desired learning objectives. All exercises will be supported by the necessary Operational Test and Training Infrastructure, tools, range, aggressors, and other critical components.

Project Power

Q. How is the Space Force reoptimizing to “Project Power?”

A. The Space Force will be strengthening force presentation of ready and integrated units. Our forces must be fully integrated into the Joint Force, properly trained and equipped, and ready to accept mission command for assigned objectives. Several actions will be taken to formalize and better equip space forces for the joint fight. We will formalize Combat Squadrons as the Space Force Unit of Action, complete the standup and resourcing of Space Force Service Components, and accelerate implementation of Space Force Generation (SPAFORGEN).

Q. What is a Combat Squadron (CSQ)?

A. A CSQ is an aggregation of employed-in-place force elements assigned or attached to a Combatant Commander. Some Combat Squadrons exist today, but the construct has not been fully implemented throughout the Service.

Q. What is the difference between Combat Squadrons and Combat Detachments?

A. Combat Detachments are a similar aggregation of force elements as Combat Squadrons, but specifically for deployed forces. Since the preponderance of Space Force forces are employed-in-place, most operations will be conducted by Combat Squadrons.

Q. Why does the Space Force need Service Components?

A. Like the other military services, the Space Force must prepare and present forces and personnel to every Combatant Command. This will be done through service components, the primary building blocks of the Joint Force. The Space Force is creating them to normalize our relationship with Combatant Commanders.

Q. Does the Space Force have any Service Components?

A. Today the Space Force has Service Components to USSPACECOM, USINDOPACOM, USFK, USCENTCOM, USEUCOM, and USAFRICOM. We are focused on properly resourcing these components.

Q. What will be the order of additional Service Component stand-ups?

A. We are finalizing the implementation plan to prioritize the remaining activations.

Q. What is Space Force Generation (SPAFORGEN)?

A. SPAFORGEN is the service’s model for systematically selecting, resourcing, and preparing units for operational employment. It is a rotational model that allows space forces to conduct daily operations while still having capacity to train for high-end readiness. Implementation of SPAFORGEN began in 2022; we are currently prioritizing resources to fully implement the model throughout the Space Force by the end of 2024.

Q. Do you have sufficient resources to implement SPAFORGEN?

A. Yes. We can fully implement SPAFORGEN by reprioritizing existing resources. If additional resources are required, requirements will be built into the FY26 or later budget cycles.

Q. Are you renaming Space Operations Command (SpOC)?

A. With the establishment of SPACEFORSPACE (S4S) as the Service Component to USSPACECOM, SpOC can now focus on preparing, generating, and sustaining ready forces. Redesignating SpOC as Combat Forces Command (CFC) distinguishes the command as the lead FLDCOM executing the Space Force Generation process and distinguishes it from S4S. CFC is not a new organization; it simply recognizes that the establishment of S4S has changed SpOC’s mission and redesignates it accordingly.

Develop Capabilities

Q. How is the Space Force reoptimizing to “Develop Capabilities?”

A. The Space Force is establishing a Space Futures Command, a new Field Command under a command staff that oversees three centers collectively responsible for developing and validating concepts, experimentation, wargaming, and mission design analysis. Space Futures Command will be focused on long-term competitiveness and forward-looking force design processes. Additionally, the Space Force will focus on prioritizing and streamlining Science and technology pipelines to better meet warfighter needs at the point of delivery and to maintain competitiveness over the long term.

Q. What organizations will fall under Space Futures Command?

A. Space Futures Command will consist of a new Concepts and Technology Center, a new Wargaming Center, and the existing Space Warfighting Analysis Center (SWAC).

1. The Concepts and Technology Center will define the future operating environment with a focus on threat to, and opportunities for new concepts for the Space Force and the Joint Force.
2. The Wargaming Center will validate the strategies and concepts developed by the Concepts and Technology Center through modeling, simulation, exercises, and wargaming. SWAC will use these results to define high-level requirements that can be refined into future force options.
3. The Space Warfighting Analysis Center (SWAC) will integrate into the new Field Command, building on its heritage and trusted status within the DoD and Congress. It will synthesize validated strategies, concepts, and force options through mission area design into technical architectures that define the attributes of the objective force. The outputs of these efforts will be managed at the headquarters by CSRO and incorporated into DOTMLFP-P force planning to form the basis of a fully burdened, combat-credible objective force.

Q. Where will this command be located?

A. For rapid implementation, the Command will be stood up virtually, leaving constituent organizations where they are today. A future basing study will determine if adjustments need to be made.

Q. Who will lead this command?

A. Our intent is for the Space Futures Command to be a Field Command commanded by a General Officer. While we can move out now with what we have, long-term we will likely need to program for more General Officer headspace.

Q. How will this impact SWAC?

A. Space Futures Command will be created to compliment the functions that SWAC currently performs. SWAC is an important component of our current force design process, but it alone is not sufficient to meet the demands of GPC. Our goal is to protect what SWAC does well today and enhance its effectiveness by adding complimentary functions like threat forecasting, concepts development, and concepts validation.

Q. How will the Space Force strengthen science and technology processes for space?

A. To sustain technical advantage in GPC, the space S&T enterprise must be optimized for the transition of operationally relevant technology at a pace and scale that exceeds that of rival powers. The Space Force will reprioritize and streamline S&T pipelines to better meet warfighter needs at the point of delivery. Integration with force design will ensure relevance of S&T investments over the long term.

Q. What changes will this have on early S&T funding?

A. We do not intend to make significant changes to early S&T (basic and applied research) funding process. These activities benefit from having fewer restrictions. The prioritized S&T list of space needs will inform early S&T.

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