



# TRANSCRIPT

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

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Secretary of Defense, Honorable Mark T. Esper  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark A. Milley  
Chief of Space Operations, United States Space Force, General John W. Raymond  
Commander, United States Space Command, General James H. Dickinson

20 August 2020

(APPLAUSE)

STAFF: Please be seated. It's my great honor to introduce the 27th Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Mark T. Esper.

(APPLAUSE)

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MARK T. ESPER: Well good morning, everyone. It's great to be here again on this very special day and today it's special because we honor two great leaders. First of all, we honor the leadership of General John "Jay" Raymond and recognize General James Dickinson as he takes command of the United States Space Command.

To all of our distinguished guests, colleagues, friends, family and others gathered here today, thank you for your support of these two outstanding leaders. First and foremost, I would like to recognize General Raymond's -- Raymond's wife Mollie -- Mollie, their daughters Christina and Amy -- I guess they're not with us -- and your son Gary, as well, but all of you for your unfailing devotion throughout -- throughout your husband's and father's decades of exceptional service. Thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)

I'd also like to recognize General Dickinson's family, his wife Angie and your four children, Debra , Hank, Olivia and Joe for standing alongside your husband and father for so many years now and for your continued support over these next four years. Thank you all very much as well.

(APPLAUSE)

For decades, the world has enjoyed the freedom to operate in space. Today, billions of people worldwide rely on space-based capabilities such as the Global Positioning System pioneered by American scientists and innovators and operated by the United States military.

Everything from commerce, transportation and tracking national security threats to cellphones, ATMs and everything else in our modern way of life rely upon unfettered access in, from and to space. These technologies and scientific achievements have created remarkable opportunities and our space-based capabilities have provided a decisive edge for our warfighters.

Yet we now find that space has become highly contested and the gains we possess are threatened. Moreover, as we continue to push the limits of science and innovation, we recognize that our competitors are seeking new ways to exploit our systems and to undermine our military advantage.

We know, for example, that China and Russia are weaponizing space through the development of anti-satellite missiles, directed energy weapons and more, all designed to hold the United States and allied space systems at risk. They have turned a once peaceful arena into a warfighting domain.

America and our partners have led the world in space. Beijing and Moscow seek to take that away. Therefore, in this new era of great power competition, the United States must be able to compete and win across all domains -- air, land, sea, cyberspace and space.

Space power will be essential in any future conflict and the National Defense Strategy underscores the importance of modernizing our space capabilities to effectively respond to this rapidly changing and complex security environment.

That is why in June of this year, the department published the Defense Space Strategy, the first of its kind. This guidance takes a bold approach in advancing our military space power to achieve a secure, stable and accessible space domain.

The Department of Defense will do so at an accelerated pace by preserving freedom of operations in the domain, providing space support to our operations to improve day-to-day life, and strengthen the joint and combined force, and finally ensuring stability by deterring aggression and maintaining a safe, sustainable space environment.

Furthermore, with the creation of the U.S. Space Force, the first new service branch in over 70 years, and U.S. Space Command, we have an unprecedented opportunity to transform every aspect of our defense space enterprise and apply the necessary focus, energy and resources to ensure that our nation can defend our vital interests and capabilities in space now and in the decades to come.

To drive such an historic undertaking requires bold leadership and tremendous vision. That is why we have placed our trust and confidence in General John Raymond to serve in these two critical roles in the space enterprise, both as the Commander of U.S. Space Command since August of 2019 and concurrently as the first Chief of Space Operations since December of last year.

With more than 36 years of experience steeped in space operations, General Raymond is one of the few leaders capable of wearing both hats as the department embarks on the most significant transformation in the history of our nation's security space program.

General Raymond is no stranger to taking on positions of great responsibility. As a young crew commander of the Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile, one of the three legs of our nuclear triad, he knew well the importance of discipline, execution and maintaining a steady hand in a no-fail mission.

This served him well as he broadened his experience with opportunities in -- in areas such as commercial space lift operations, space surveillance and space and missile program -- programming, just to name a few. Along the way, General Raymond deepened his extensive expertise in planning and executing national security space operations, and importantly he developed a reputation as one of our nation's most sought after leaders.

As a commander at all echelons, from the squadron level to combatant command and everything in between, General Raymond has demonstrated an innate ability to adapt and lead in the most dynamic environments, hallmarks that served him well as the head of U.S. Space Command.

In this capacity, General Raymond's strong leadership helped stand up the nation's 11th combatant command, ensuring that our military can conduct operations in, from and to space to deter conflict, and if necessary, to fight and win.

And through his bold vision, the command has increased the ability of the Joint Force to project power and influence while reducing decision timelines for space operations and bringing focused attention to defending U.S. interests in space.

America and the free world need intrepid leaders like General Raymond who can think beyond what is possible and take daring, calculated risks to advance our space enterprise. This is also why it was an easy decision to install him as our first Chief of Space Operations and the first Officer in the United States Space Force.

In this role, General Raymond continues to push joint warfighting excellence in the space domain by focusing on the organization, training and equipping of our nation's finest space professionals. Jay, our nation continues to have great trust and confidence in your ability to lead as you carry on as the Chief of Space Operations.

I want to commend you for your outstanding leadership of Space Command and advancing National Defense Strategy. Now with your efforts focused solely on the United States Space Force, I know you will continue to push our military to even higher levels and keep our nation *semper supra*, always above.

Thank you and Mollie for your continued service to our great nation.

(APPLAUSE)

While we were standing up a separate and independent Space Force, we know that the space enterprise is an inherently joint endeavor, with our entire military relying heavily on the capabilities integral to the space domain.

So in the past year, we've installed an Air Force Officer who became the first space member as the head of Space Command and I am thrilled to welcome its first truly joint leader, an Army Officer at the helm, General James Dickinson.

General Dickinson takes charge during an important time in our nation's space enterprise and I know that he possesses the expertise, the character and the leadership to guide the command into the future.

Jim Dickinson demonstrated his talent and skills early on as a young Air Defense Artillery Officer, a critical role in protecting our forces from aerial and missile attack as well as airborne surveillance. These officers must not only be able to think on their feet, but they must also be able to do so while leading people and managing complex network and radar systems in the most challenging of environments.

This experience propelled General Dickinson throughout his career and propelled him well for leadership opportunities as a commander of a battalion, two air defense artillery brigades and an Army air and missile defense command.

And importantly, prior to becoming the Deputy Commander of the U.S. Space Command, General Dickinson commanded the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, Army Forces Strategic Command as well as the joint functional component command for integrated missile defense.

A similar experience that has equipped him to lead space operations in a joint environment. General Dickinson, Jim, as you take command I want you to know that we have your -- the utmost confidence in your abilities, the leadership, acumen and foresight you have demonstrated

throughout your career will serve you well. Leah and I are excited to watch you and Angie lead Space Command now and in the years ahead. Congratulations.

(APPLAUSE)

In closing, I would like to once again thank the city of Colorado Springs and the surrounding communities for their staunch support of the Department of Defense mission and this command and for their unwavering commitment to our service members.

To the men and women of U.S. Space Command, I want to thank you for all that you do to protect and preserve the freedom of navigation in, from and to space for all. Your steadfast commitment to the mission and to upholding your oath to the Constitution is the reason our military is regarded one -- as one of the country's most trusted and respected institutions.

The United States of America is and will remain the global leader in space because you stand on the forward edge of the highest frontier. We are stronger, safer and more secure because of your commitment to never cede this ultimate high ground. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

STAFF: Thank you, Secretary Esper. It is now my privilege to present the 20th Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark A. Milley.

(APPLAUSE)

GENERAL MARK MILLEY: I could've sworn that we were just here, Shags. Shags is supposed to be in civilian clothes, you're retired. I don't know if anyone's told you that but you're retired there, big fella. You're supposed to look like Renuart over here.

(LAUGHTER)

Hey, look it, just a couple of minutes here and -- and we'll conclude this but this is a big deal. That little ceremony that you just saw a few minutes ago between Jay Raymond and Jim Dickinson is huge for America, really for the world, because this command, Space Command, as Secretary Esper just mentioned, is so critically important in today's world, given the various domains of war -- land, sea, air, cyber and -- and space.

So as we evolved over the last couple of years, much credit is due to the Air Force, much credit's due to now retired Dave Goldfein, much credit is due to the Secretary of Defense and thousands of people, but probably no more credit is due than is due to Jay Raymond.

So Jay, I'm not going to recount your career, I'm just going to -- and you're still on active duty, you're not going the way of Shags, you're not putting civilian clothes on right now, you're the commander of a force that's responsible to train, man and equip the space warriors or space guardians, whatever the name's going to end up being, but those troopers that are going to defend this country from the ultimate high ground, as the Secretary said.

You are a national treasure. You have created something that didn't exist before and you've created something that is unbelievably important. As you look around this building right now, the reason you're here is because of capabilities in space.

Some of you flew here, some of you drove but all of you came via GPS some way, somehow. All of the planes on this airbase couldn't take off and land without the capabilities of space. All of these televisions, all of your iPhones and -- and all of these iPads, all this -- all this Zoom stuff, none of that could be happening without the capabilities of space, and frankly none of our capabilities in space will be happening without Jay Raymond.

So Jay, you have done an unbelievable job. Thank you so much on behalf of every American that's out there. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)



And Mollie, thank you. As I mentioned before when we -- I didn't -- and I didn't mean to embarrass you, Leah, by calling you out but -- but the families are so critically important and Jay couldn't have done what he did without your support and the support of your entire family and he can't do what he's continuing to do as the first Chief of the Space Force without your support and love and care and dedication and sacrifice. So thank you so much for what you and all the families do.

(APPLAUSE)

And for Jim Dickinson and his incredible family, a family of service, with his wife Angie and Debra back here -- Debra's a school teacher, married to an infantry major, an incredible example of service there. Olivia is a journalist and we like to think that freedom of the press matters in our Constitution, so thank you for what you're doing every single day. And their sons Hank and Joe both -- Joe wants to be a pilot and -- and Hank is in the -- in the construction business and his wife is a nurse.

So you've got nurses, you've got teachers, you've got a future pilot -- military pilot, you've got an infantry officer and you've got a teacher and you've got a mom. You talk about service, that's incredible service in the Dickinson family. So thanks to all of you because Jim, as you mentioned earlier on your promotion, he wouldn't be here either without all of you. So thank you for what you do.

(APPLAUSE)

And the Secretary noted, a lot of the accomplishments of Jim Dickinson -- and I won't rehash that -- but just to say that I've known Jim Dickinson for a long time, both as the Chief of Staff of the Army and in pre -- previous roles within the military.

I've gotten to know him very, very well and I can tell you that when it came time to look at who's going to be the commander of SPACECOM following Jay Raymond, we did a -- a search, as you might -- as you might imagine. The Secretary was very, very rigorous in his review process --

lots of interviews, looking and vetting through lots of records, and there were multiple, highly qualified, really talented candidates.

At the end of the day, Secretary Esper decided to nominate Jim Dickinson. The reason he did that was because of obvious areas of competence, exceptional skill coming up through the system with the air defense artillery of the Army and a lot of joint experience in various commands, as the Secretary mentioned.

So he has exceptional competence but also because of character. Jim Dickinson is a man of enormous character and in this particular job, he's going to need every ounce of that character because he is going to have to continually render his best military advice to the Secretary of Defense and then the President in times of crisis, in good times and bad times and he's going to have to stand in the breach, be candid, honest, forthright, just as Jay Raymond did, just as every one of us in these positions has to do every day, day in and day out.

And it was for those reasons that Jim Dickinson, in addition to competence, it's his character that puts him on this stage before you. I can tell you our nation and SPACECOM is in great hands with now General -- formerly Lieutenant General, now General Jim Dickinson. So Jim, thanks for what you do, thanks for what you're about to do and thanks for your great leadership.

(APPLAUSE)

And lastly, to the -- to the soldiers and the sailors, the airmen and Marines, Coast Guardsmen, civilians out there not only SPACECOM, but Space Force. Right now, you're relatively small in number, but your impact on our nation is way bigger than your numbers would indicate.

So I just want to publicly thank each of you for what you every single day for all of us -- all 350 million Americans. Most of whom will never know you, but every single day you're impacting our lives in positive ways, so thank you for what you're doing and God bless America.

NARRATOR: Ladies and Gentlemen, the Chief of Space Operations, General John Raymond.

(APPLAUSE)

GEN JOHN RAYMOND: Mr. Secretary, Chairman, distinguished guests, family, friends and most importantly the men and women of USSPACECOM...what a spectacular day here in Colorado Springs. It is always good to be back home at Peterson Air Force Base.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for presiding over today's ceremony. For your visionary leadership establishing this command and, in doing so, raising space to a level commensurate with its importance to our national security. Most importantly, thank you for your trust and confidence in me, and our space command team.

I also want to thank the chairman for participating today. I have had the opportunity to serve with General Milley in both my Space Force and Space Command hats, and I am so thankful for your leadership. We all benefit from your integrity, your unwavering commitment to our constitution, and your enduring commitment to America's soldiers, sailors, airman, marines, space professionals and their families.

As I have said many times, getting stationed in Colorado Springs is like winning the lottery...I would be remiss if I didn't thank the community leaders with us today.

To my wife Mollie, and our kids Christina, Amy and Garry...I can't thank you enough. To say this has been a pretty dynamic few years would be a huge understatement. I appreciate your love and support. Mollie, your commitment and dedication to our AFSPC, JFSCC, USSPACECOM, and Space Force families has been especially important in this time of change. I love you.

To the men and women of United States space command, I couldn't be more proud of you and your accomplishments.

Two years ago in August 2018, someone whispered in my ear that I should start planning to re-establish United States space command and to be prepared to stand up the command in just three months.

A couple of days later, I was headed out for an extended TDY to participate in a promotion board, and brought a small team of five planners with me: Brigadier General Tom James, Brigadier General Shawn Bratton, Mr. Dave Toczek, Colonel Ken Klock, and Mr. Mark Main. The team worked all day while I was on the board, and then together we would spend the evenings refining the plan. This went on for a week, and at the end of the week we emerged with a plan for the establishment of this command.

What's interesting when you look at the butcher block paper we used to develop the plan...it is almost exactly what we implemented. I give that team a lot of credit.

After returning from that TDY, I tapped Brigadier General Rock Miller to implement and he pulled together a task force that did the detailed planning to stand up the command a year later. Rock, my hats off to you for your leadership.

And there we were on 29 August 2019, just a year ago, in a ceremony hosted by the President and the Vice President in the White House Rose Garden, where Secretary Esper signed a document formally establishing the command and re-assigning forces from USSTRATCOM to USSPACECOM. CMSgt Towberman unfurled our flag and we were established!

But it was clear after a tremendous amount of hard work...we were just at the starting line...and it was time to sprint. Our national security demanded it.

This command is purpose-built to meet the demands of the national security strategy and the national defense strategy. To compete, and to deter from a position of strength, and if deterrence were to fail...to win.

This command is tailor-made to focus on: enhancing our ability to conduct offensive and defensive operations in space, to further strengthen our partnerships with the intelligence community, and with our allies, and finally, to enhance global warfighting, integrating more seamlessly with our combatant command partners.

U.S. Space Command is laser-focused on protecting and defending our critical space assets. We've established the joint task force space defense, a first of its kind operational command

focused on warfighting. Under the leadership of Brigadier General Tom James, the team constructed a unified structure with our intelligence partners and allies.

We also established, under the leadership of Major General Stephen Whiting and now Major General John Shaw, our first-ever combined command. This team of allies, partners, commercial, and civil space professionals, is taking the necessary steps to ensure our joint warfighting partners in the combatant commands can fully leverage spacepower in their global operations.

A special thank you to our allies and partners in the room and around the world. This command has focused on expanding partnerships because we know the u.s. cannot protect and defend space on our own. We are stronger when we work together. We are a more credible warfighting force because our allies increase lethality through their unique capabilities and perspectives.

We could not do our mission without our incredible partnership with the intelligence community and the national reconnaissance office. Our organizations have never been closer. This partnership has been absolutely critical to understanding the threats in space and on earth. Your unwavering commitment and tradecraft ensures our enduring safety and security.

To our combatant command partners...our primary measure of success is to deliver the warfighting capabilities you need, when you need them...without fail. I am proud of our efforts to advance joint force global integration and would like to highlight Colonel Chris Wendland for the work he has done to develop our joint planning cell. Your integration efforts are leading the joint force. My hats off to you and your team.

I would also like also give a special thanks to my front office team, the communications team, and my security team for their strong support and selfless service.

Finally, the real source of combat power at U.S. Space Command is our warfighters. We've been deliberate in our process to attract, develop, educate, and retain a cadre of warrior-minded experts ready to address the challenges in space.

To all the directors, leaders, soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, space professionals and civilians who make up this command, you do so much for our nation, and I'm proud of each and every one of you.

USSPACECOM's foot never let off the accelerator over the last year. But as we continue the transition from establishment to full operational capability...general Jim Dickinson's foot will now be on the pedal.

Jim, thank you for serving with me over the past 6 months as my deputy, I couldn't be more excited that you and Angie will now lead this command. There is nobody more qualified to assume command and I am excited to see where you will lead it.

As the United States space force's chief of space operations, my sole focus now shifts to providing you the capabilities you need, at the time and tempo you need them, to successfully conduct your mission. I promise I will give it my all.

Mr. Secretary, Chairman, I am pleased to report that our nation is better prepared today to compete, deter and win in the space domain than we were just a year ago... and, I am convinced that the joint space warfighters assigned to USSPACECOM under the steady hand of Jim Dickinson will ensure that into the future.

(APPLAUSE)

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

(APPLAUSE)

GEN JAMES DICKINSON: Good morning! Thank you all for being here today, especially under these extraordinary circumstances. I am truly humbled, and deeply honored, to assume command of U.S. Space Command. I am thankful to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the secretary of defense, and to the president of the United States for the trust and confidence

they have placed in me to lead our nation's newest combatant command in its role to protect, defend, and advance our nation's interests in space.

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

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

I am deeply indebted to my family for all their support and love over the years. First and foremost is my wife of 34 years and my high school sweetheart, Angie. Of course our daughter Deborah and her husband Matt, our son Hank and his wife Sara, our daughter Olivia, our son Joe, and most certainly our grandchildren Reagan, Junior, Colton, Peyton, and Riley who are without a doubt the stars of our lives.

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

And finally, I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the members of our new extended joint family, the warfighters of United States Space Command -- the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines,

space professionals, allies, interagency partners, government civilians, and contract partners. You are the real source of this combatant command's combat power. You've worked tirelessly over the last year to establish this command, and to create the conditions for its success in this new warfighting domain. I am grateful to have been a part of this effort, so far, and I am proud of each of you.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

As highlighted in our defense space strategy, we are facing “the most significant transformation in the history of the U.S. national security space program”. We have a unique opportunity and a solemn responsibility. As commander, I take this responsibility seriously. The U.S. is the best

in space today. U.S. Space Command will ensure this remains true as we work to implement the national defense strategy, defense space strategy, and unified command plan direction for maintaining space superiority and protecting and defending our critical space capabilities.

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

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)