

Opening Statement, Rep. Seth Moulton (As Prepared)

FY24 Request for National Security Space Programs

26 April 2023

Thank you, Chairman Lamborn, and welcome to our panel of witnesses. Across the jurisdiction of the subcommittee, our National Security Space architecture is one that has experienced the most significant transformation over the past several years. This transformation has been necessary to respond to the rapid pace at which our adversaries are developing, deploying, and demonstrating capabilities in space and on earth to deny, degrade, and destroy U.S. satellites. In just the past two years, the People's Republic of China has almost doubled their number of satellites on orbit to 400, with plans for nearly 1,000 by 2030—and they include capabilities with inherently offensive applications.

Both the PRC and Russia are increasingly brazen in displaying their space warfighting capabilities – whether it be the PRC “grappler,” which demonstrated the ability to drag a satellite out of its orbit, last year's incredibly destructive and debris-producing Russian anti-satellite test, or the multiple occasions where DoD and commercial satellites have been jammed during the war in Ukraine. Broadly, the PRC is putting in place the capability and capacity in space and on the ground to hold U.S. assets at risk. Given what we know about PRC ambitions with regards to Taiwan, many experts believe that their first move in a conflict would happen in space.

In response to this growing threat, I am encouraged that this Administration has taken seriously the need to move away from the status quo, and transition to a more robust and resilient U.S. national security space architecture. This means shifting from several exquisite “big juicy targets” in Geosynchronous Earth Orbit –

or GEO – to many smaller, more commercially available satellites in Low Earth Orbit – or LEO. For the NRO, over the next decade, this budget request continues efforts to more than quadruple the number of satellites currently on orbit. This is a sharp departure from the attitude of the department just four years ago. Despite repeated warnings, the Space Force was modernizing the existing space-based missile warning constellation by simply replacing the large, exquisite, unprotected satellites in the GEO orbit. Over the course of three years, the development price tag for NextGen OPIR ballooned to \$14.4 billion with significant delays. In 2021, Space Force pivoted to a proliferated missile warning architecture. The U.S. Space Force and the Space Development Agency, less than 3 years after contract award, just launched its first set of demonstration satellites to prove out the proliferated warfighting architecture in LEO, which will also provide data transport and missile track capabilities. DoD will be able to expand and improve capability every two years, as soon as the technology is available, rather than waiting for the standard 10-year acquisition cycle that has plagued the space community in the past.

In addition to these encouraging steps forward on acquisition, the space community is making strides on the adoption of commercial data and services. From expanding commercial imagery acquired to meet National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency requirements for the Combatant Commanders, or the great strides Space Systems Command has made to purchase commercial satellite communications and space domain awareness data, this adoption of commercial space has allowed DoD to focus on inherently military needs and stay ahead of our adversaries in the domain.

We have also made significant progress in the past several years with our incredible network of allies and partners. In addition to the work being done to share space domain awareness and adversary space capabilities, the DoD Space

Policy guidance released last August explicitly directs that our space cooperation with allies and partners include policy, strategy, capabilities, information sharing, and operations. The Administration's announcement that it would not conduct destructive, debris producing direct-ascent anti-satellite testing has opened the door to 12 other nations committing to do the same. The U.S. must continue to lead by example on establishing norms of behavior for the responsible use of and operations within the space domain.

Now, while I am increasingly encouraged by the direction of U.S. national security space as a whole, there are areas I will continue to watch closely. In addition to the pattern of large satellite programs being late and over budget, the ground system architecture still frequently comes as an afterthought. We have been notified yet again of delays to the Next-Generation Operational Ground Control Segment, the modern, cybersecure ground system to operate the GPS satellites. OCX was supposed to be delivered in 2016 for \$3.9 billion. 7 years later, and almost double that cost, we are still waiting. I know that Honorable Calvelli has highlighted this issue, but we cannot let up on existing efforts to deliver critical ground systems.

Another area where we will continue our oversight is in the "over" classification of space, which inhibits both our ability to advocate for increasing investment and expanding collaboration with our allies and partners.

Space is a fascinating and infinite domain. Until recently, we really only experienced it through the lens of science fiction. But in reality, space has been a part of our daily lives as Americans since the dawn of the space race, and our adversaries are keenly aware of that. Our warfighters everywhere, on the ground, under the sea, and in the air, depend on space. But so do people all around the world—from Americans driving to work or checking the weather, to Ukrainians

valiantly fighting an unprovoked and immoral invasion by the Russians. The global dependence on space often means relying on American satellites. We must keep them secure—not only against the threat we see today, but what we will face in the years and decades to come. I look forward to today’s discussion with our witnesses on how best to maintain U.S. superiority in space, and how this year’s president’s budget request does that.