
The Space Force and the National Security Act: All New Endeavours Suffer Growing Pains

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Abstract: The article details the history of the National Security Act (NSA), the National Security Council (NSC), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the newly created Space Force (SF) in correlation to a changing political and international landscape from the 1940s to 2021. Primary and secondary sources were reviewed and included military and intelligence experts, interviews, as well as the foundation documents and laws for the NSA. Comparatively, the NSA and these organizations are examined in parallel to the evolving international political landscape. Also, these organizations all faced similar confrontations which include, but are not limited to, the reassignment of different roles, bureaucracy, and chain of command. Yet, the NSA and the creation of these intelligence organizations as well as the new branch of the military, the Space Force, are proactive measures for the United States to maintain efficacy, advantages, and potency in the domain of space which, from a military perspective protects satellites. It also includes the temporal use of individuals getting gasoline at gas pumps and the use of cell phones. Even so, all new ventures like the SF and the foundational NSA experience challenges, controversy, confrontations, and, at times, harsh critiques. Yet, the NSA's broad-reaching security framework is still relevant and malleable to twenty-first-century policy, intelligence, and military needs. The NSA can and has met the current and future security threats like terrorism, and the new frontiers of space. Additionally, the newest member of the intelligence community, the Space Force, is a critical component to the United States military and intelligence presence in space.

Keywords: National Security Act, Space Force, Air Force, National Security Council

1. Introduction

“At age 70, the National Security Act of 1947 is now well past the normal retirement age, but, like many Baby Boomers, it is still working full time.” - Richard Betts

“When it comes to defending America, it is not enough to merely have an American presence in space, we must have American dominance in space... I'm hereby directing the Department of Defense and Pentagon to immediately begin the process necessary to establish a Space Force as the sixth branch of the armed forces. That's a big statement.” - President Donald Trump

The National Security Act (NSA), the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), and the new military branch of the United States Space Force (USSF) are proactive measures that were and are groundbreaking initiatives in intelligence, military, foreign policy, and

organization. While the 1947 NSA was a result of the lessons learned in WWII, and a preemptive approach in mitigating the Cold War, its broad-reaching security framework is still relevant and malleable to twenty-first-century policy, intelligence, and military needs. The NSA can and has met the current and future security threats like terrorism, and the new frontiers of space similar to the creation of institutions that were created through the NSA in 1947 and the amendments of 1949.

The NSA has been able to mitigate dangers and perform in a complex and changing world. This was evident in perhaps one of the biggest changes since WWII and the Cold War, the attacks of September 11. The NSA was amended to create the ODNI, Sec. 102, and Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which, despite ongoing and ever-evolving challenges on the world stage and polarized politics, are operating effectively [25].

Similarly, the Space Force is a new military branch that is addressing the twenty-first-century needs of space where foreign adversaries and commercial interests are vying for a foothold. Additionally, the USSF is necessary to meet the current challenges in space. Yet, the NSA, the renovation of the NSC, the establishment of the ODNI, and the establishment of the USSF have all faced trials and dissenters.

2. Memoir: The Contentions of the National Security Act

Public Law 80-235 states that the NSA is an “act to promote national security”, and the NSA has and continues to live up to that mission and mandate, despite some calls for retirement and reform. Interestingly, during its parturition, President Truman and others referred to it as a *unification* bill, which seemed to downplay its significance as a groundbreaking approach to defense, security, and intelligence. Also eclipsing the NSA’s initial consequence was the emergence of international institutions like the United Nations, the World Bank, and the far-reaching Marshall Plan [17]. Originally, the NSA created the

Department of the Army, which had been called the Department of War. The Department of the Navy coalesced into the National Military Establishment (NME), headed by the Secretary of Defense. Also, the NSA created a separate Department of the Air Force as its own service. The Marine Corps maintained itself as an independent service, under the Department of the Navy.

Along with the NSA being outshone by international achievements, many of the in-house new military branches bristled at the different roles, bureaucracy, and chain of command. The Navy mounted a fierce campaign against the National Security Act, wanting to preserve its status as an independent branch of the military and not be merged with the Army. Additionally, the NSA was distinguished by a bitter roles-and-missions struggle between the Air Force and the Navy. Correspondingly, during the contentious years 1946–47, with the debate over national security legislation raging, James V. Forrestal’s first stormy months as Secretary of Defense were defined by the Navy achieving its goal of making the Secretary of Defense a coordinator rather than a true administrator [35]. Figure 1 highlights the new bureaucracy the NSA created.

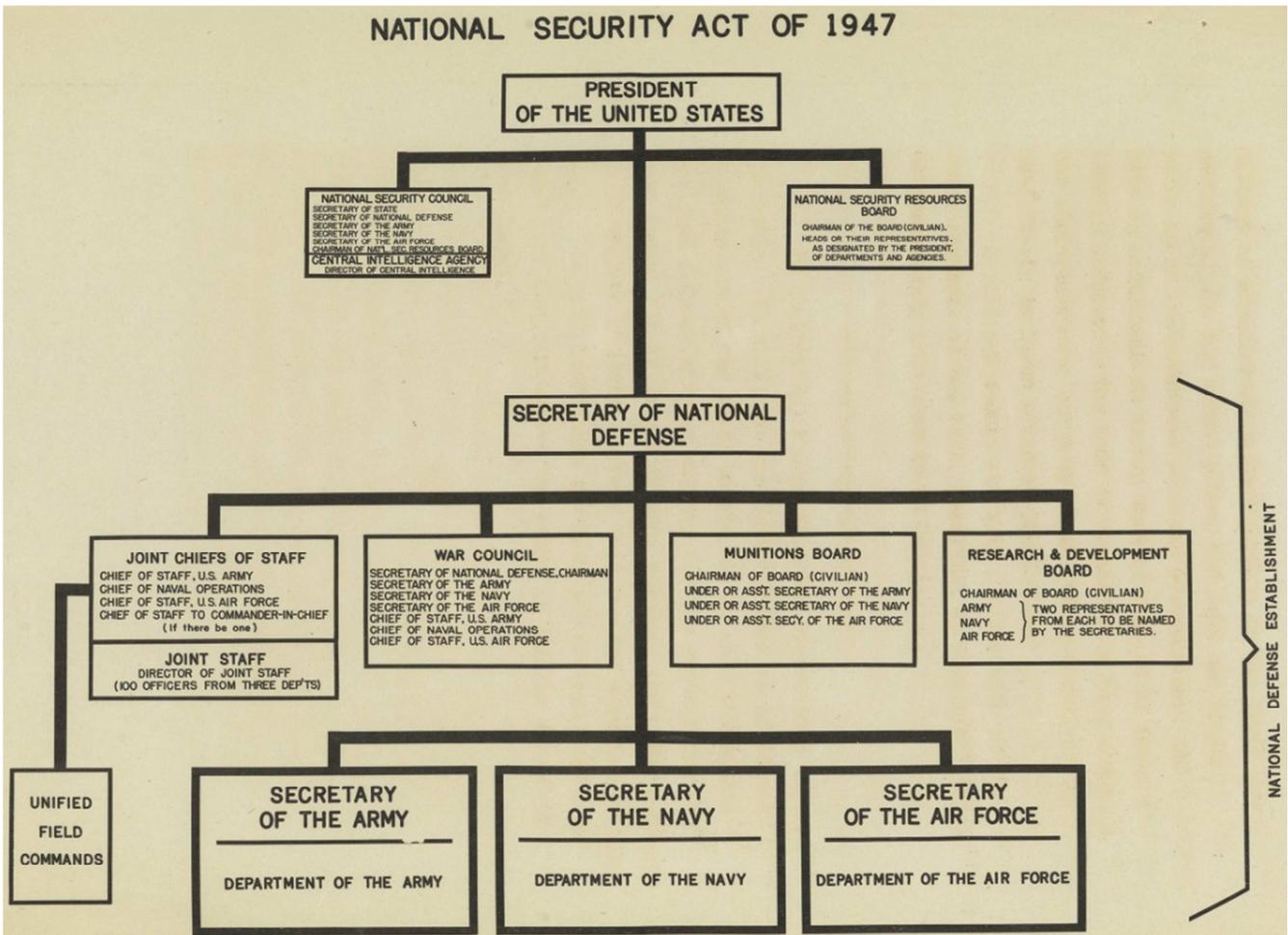


Figure 1. The NSA Chain of Command.

Additionally, the 1947 NSA gave the United States Air Force (USAF) its long-sought independence, but it failed to give the Defense Secretary sufficient authority over the awkwardly worded National Military Establishment. The Air Force had fought for more authority for the Secretary because it believed they would be ineffective without it. Moreover, USAF judged that a strong Secretary would support its claim to the strategic atomic bombing mission. Gen. Carl A. “Tooney” Spaatz, the first Chief of Staff of the Air Force, contended that the National Security Act needed fixing to enable the Defense Secretary to be “in control of the Department of National Defense and the component parts thereof.” Spaatz argued, “The safeguards placed by law to protect an individual service are an anachronism that dates from the days of sailing vessels. Any attempt to temporize with this situation by further adherence to outworn and overworked traditions will not only pyramid the costs of our national defense establishment but will be disastrous in the event of war” [35].

Navy leaders continued to emphasize that they feared excessive power in the hands of the Secretary of Defense, claiming it could produce the much-feared “man on horseback” style of leadership. Meanwhile, James Forrestal, whom the Senate had named the first Secretary of Defense (1947-1949), had begun suffering deep mental distress and was forced to resign under pressure in March 1949 and was replaced by Louis A. Johnson, a former assistant Secretary of War.

Forrestal had wanted to remain at his post for a few more months, but Truman asked for his resignation, having become aware that Forrestal had turned increasingly indecisive and appeared to be wracked with tension and fatigue. Many colleagues maintained that he was victimized by the combination of holding an office with great responsibility and insufficient authority. After relinquishing his post, Forrestal entered Bethesda Naval Hospital, where tragically, on May 22, 1949, he plunged to his death from the hospital’s 16th floor [35].

Forrestal’s replacement, Louis Johnson, strongly supported the Administration’s position on amending the National Security Act, as did the Army and the Air Force. The Navy and Marine Corps remained reluctant, however, with Gen. Clifton B. Cates, the Marine commandant, arguing that the legislation would confer “entirely too much power” on the Secretary of Defense. Eventually, in 1949, amendments resulted in The National Military Establishment (NME) becoming the Department of Defense. In addition, the Secretary of Defense gained total “direction, authority, and control” over the entire department and became the “principal assistant to the President in all matters relating to the Department of Defense” [35]. This 1949 legislation marked a critical turning point in US military organization away from decentralization toward a highly centralized national defense bureaucracy. “We finally succeeded,” Truman noted, “in getting a unification act that will enable us to have unification, and as soon as we get the crybabies in the

niches where they belong, we will have no more trouble” [35]. At the time, many interpreted the President’s comment as a slap at Navy and Marine leaders who had opposed unification and remained unreconstructed. The Air Force and the Army understood that Forrestal’s concept of the Secretary as coordinator had failed and resulted in confusion, if not chaos, in the defense establishment. The Secretary, bereft of the requisite authority, could not make decisions.

Additionally, the NSA included mandates for initial iterations of the CIA (revolutionary as the first permanent peacetime intelligence gathering organization) along with codifying the National Security Council (NSC) and the NME, which streamlined the Departments of War and Navy and placed them under the jurisdiction of the new Secretary of Defense. The National Security Council would be utilized by all presidents to coordinate foreign policy within the executive branch [11].

The new positions of the CIA Chief and the National Security Advisor were also created; The CIA chief was not only designated as head of the CIA but as Director of Central Intelligence. This role was tasked with collecting and presenting all of the nation’s intelligence to the NSC. Also, the National Security Advisor position had not existed in the original inception of the NSA. Originally, it was an executive secretary position to supervise staff and to facilitate the NSC in its work [5]. When the NSA is looked at so concisely in terms of challenge and change, it becomes dizzying how quickly and significantly it codified so many offices, positions, and agencies.

3. The NSC, the CIA, and the USAF: The National Security Act Soldiers on

From its inception, the structure and functioning of the NSC tended to rely to a significant degree upon the connection (or lack thereof) between the President and his principal advisers and department heads, and has been reflected in the President’s predilections. For example, Eisenhower, wanting to distance his campaign from Truman’s Cold War policy, proposed changes to Truman’s NSC that would “allow that body to be more responsive to the Cold War and its new attendant political and military realities” [9]. Eisenhower believed that Truman, and his administration, was not effective and proactive in responding to the post-modern twentieth-century demands of the Cold War. Eisenhower felt that the previous administration had been sluggish to respond to fluctuations on the international scene and that the NSC was not bureaucratically designed to respond to crises. According to Eisenhower, “The failure of this agency to do the job for which it was set up—to make the right plans in time—produces waste on a grand scale.” He also stated that the NSC was a “shadow agency and not effective at post-WWII policy decisions” [9].

According to researchers Grant Mullins and Drew Cramer, the real innovation of Eisenhower’s reforms came from the

conceptualization of the NSC as contributing to coherent national security policy, with presidents initiating reforms to the NSC in relation to the evolving role of the United States in the world. They make the case that these reforms would not have been accomplished were it not for the fluidity of the structure of the NSA [9].

Evolution also affected the CIA, which was originally formed as a small clerical unit within the NSC, yet, took on a life of its own as its importance was deemed paramount to the postmodern twentieth century. Growing out of the wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the CIA undertook covert political operations abroad with the National Security Council Directive 4 A and 10/2, directing the CIA to “perform other such function and duties related to national security as the NSC directs” [4]. For almost 58 years the CIA continued to head intelligence operations. This went unchallenged until the intelligence overhaul of 9/11, when the Senate confirmed John Negroponte as the first Director of National Intelligence in April 2005. The 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act created that position on the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, one of the biggest waves to hit the NSA in the twentieth century [18].

The wrangling for funding, power, and authority also tested the Air Force during the first inception of the NSA. According to Herman Welch, historian of Air Force History, “Two factors caused tempers to flare. First, the Truman Administration was determined to hold the defense budget to about \$13 billion a year, a relatively low amount. Second, Forrestal believed that sustaining a [balanced] force of land, air, and sea components required the US to split the tight budget into three nearly equal portions. This intensified the roles-and-missions struggle. The Navy thought it was in danger of losing its air arm to the Air Force. The Air Force was convinced that the Navy was attempting to build a strategic air force of its own” [35]. These examples illustrate the contentious as well as malleable nature of new endeavors as shifts occur among presidents, personnel, military, and intelligence landscape, authority, and bureaucracy.

4. Department of Homeland Security (DHS): A National Security Act Armageddon

The clamor over how the United States could have been attacked on September 11 and destabilized so effectively resulted in what most feel was the single largest overhaul of US national security since the creation of the 1947 National Security Act. Because of the lack of coordination between agencies in sharing intelligence and responding to threats, the National Intelligence Reform Act was an attempt to make sure such information silos among the intelligence community could not lead to another terrorist attack, especially on American soil.

While 9/11 was considered by some to be a surprise, many suspect in the preceding decade, a “dozen high-profile blue-ribbon commissions, think-tank studies, and government

reports all sounded the alarm, warning about the grave new threat of terrorism and recommending urgent and far-reaching intelligence reforms to tackle it. Those studies issued a total of 340 recommendations that focused on crucial intelligence shortcomings such as coordination problems, human-intelligence weaknesses, and poor information sharing within and across agencies” [25]. According to author Amy Zegart in her article “In the Deep Fake Era, Counterterrorism is Harder,” she feels, “These were exactly the same weaknesses the 9/11 Commission ultimately identified. However, before the attacks, almost none of the recommendations were fully implemented. The overwhelming majority, 268 recommendations, produced no action at all—not even a phone call, a memo, or a meeting.” [36].

Former CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell warned before the 9/11 attacks that the threat landscape was changing dramatically—just as it did after the Cold War—and not because of a single emerging terrorist group or a rising nation-state. “Advances in artificial intelligence, open-source internet-based computing, biotechnology, satellite miniaturization, and a host of other fields are giving adversaries new capabilities; eroding America’s intelligence lead; and placing even greater demands on intelligence agencies” [36]. Many proponents of the newly created Space Force echo these same confrontations currently facing US missions and authority in space.

The fallout from the 9/11 attacks altered the NSC, the intelligence community, congressional oversight, and virtually every executive branch department. Throughout all these changes, it was the foundation of the National Security Act that was the springboard for policy, intelligence, and military approaches to the twenty-first-century political landscape. On October 8, 2001, President Bush issued Executive Order 13228. The order created the Homeland Security Council (HSC) and the Office of Homeland Security (OHS) and located both entities within the White House. It was signed into law on 25 November 2002 [28].

The Homeland Security Act (HSA) of 2002 consolidated 22 federal agencies into one department headed by Governor Tom Ridge, the first Secretary of Homeland Security. Throughout the debate of the HSA, lawmakers on both sides made comments about how fast the creation of the new department occurred. The National Security Act of 1947, with its subsequent 1949 amendments, took approximately the same amount of time to structure and pass through Congress [9].

Many new military and intelligence ventures have suffered the challenges of inception, confusion, codification, and, sometimes, lack of moments of clarity, but all great ventures suffer growing pains. Despite some critics’ argument that the structure of the DHS, ODNI, and the NSA have always been imperfect, even so, they have been—and continue to be—malleable, adaptable, and effective. Today, the challenge to US leadership is to keep the military establishment fine-tuned during a period in which the US has undertaken additional new international responsibilities and to bridge the new

frontiers of cybersecurity, weaponized information, artificial intelligence, and now space.

5. To Infinity and Beyond: The United States Space Force

As early as the 1990s, discussion was underway in the Air Force that space operations were radically different from traditional operations of land, sea, and air, and that a separate Space Force was the logical answer [4]. The Space Force was officially established by the Trump Administration on December 20th, 2019; Congress created it with the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act as a department of the Air Force [10]. The USSF has been plagued with many of the same issues as the creation of the NSA. Concerns about headquarters, budget, bureaucracy, unclear organizational culture, mission, Battlestar Galactica uniforms, and small career fields have faced this new military branch. Also confronting this new organization is delineating the various roles of all the combat commands in space as seen in figure 2. The US Space Command is separate and not part of the USSF, and while it draws heavily on guardians with expertise in space operations, it also relies on the other

military branches. While the Space Force is a separate branch of the military, it falls under the USAF which handles about 75 percent of its support functions [3].

The Space Force describes its mission as follows:

The USSF is a military service that organizes, trains, and equips space forces in order to *protect U.S. and allied interests in space* and to *provide space capabilities to the joint force* [emphasis added]. USSF responsibilities include developing Guardians, acquiring military space systems, maturing the military doctrine for space power, and organizing space forces to present to our Combatant Commands [23].

While the mission and vision does seem vague, what can be viewed as a common denominator is the USSF exists to respond to a sentiment that the US can, and should, have a military presence in space and, to some degree, should consolidate the intelligence and mission of space while reporting to the various commands that have a role in space. Of course, international military restrictions exist and the US is beholden to the Outer Space Treaty which prevents, among other things, weapons of mass destruction in space (although this notably excludes conventional weaponry, as seen in the Soviet Shchit-1 and Shchit-2 systems) [31].

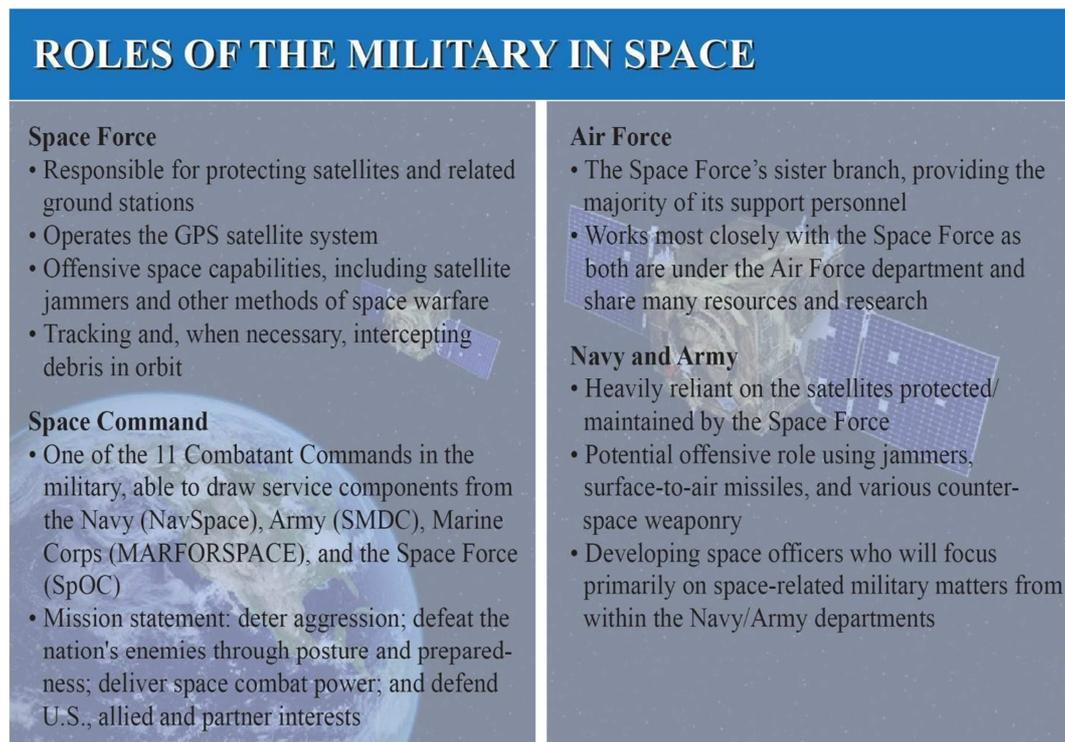


Figure 2. C/O Xavier Dawson.

It's undeniable that space is potentially a very lucrative future asset for both private industry and world governments, an idea reinforced by increased private and public focus on space and the success of individuals like Elon Musk and Russia's endeavors to shoot the first commercial movie from space. Accordingly, one benefit of the USSF is the potential of a consolidated space-related military. The likelihood is that,

in the very near future, space will become a battlefield, despite treaties governing space [32]. Adversaries like China and Russia are already making political moves into space, and China has increased its space spending by almost 350% [32]. Also, Russia has recently claimed that Venus is a Russian planet, according to the European Space Agency. But, ultimately, for all players, the territory of space is going to

become a land grab for the country best prepared technologically and militarily [19].

General John Raymond, Chief of U.S Space Operations has stated that “We have taken space for granted.” In defending the USSF he points to the congested and competitive domain in space. “There has been an increase from 1500-5,000 low earth objects and the guardians are keeping track of them.” In fact, on November 16, 2021, Russia launched an anti-satellite missile that destroyed its COSMOS-1488 and created over 1500 particles of orbital space debris and hundreds of thousands of smaller debris. International Astronauts inside the US Space Station were told to seek shelter in their docking capsules. US officials emphasized the “long-term dangers and potential global economic fallout from the Russian test, which has created hazards for satellites that provide people around the world with phone and broadband service, weather forecasting, GPS systems which underpin aspects of the financial system, including bank machines, as well in-flight entertainment and satellite radio and television” [1].

It can be easy to take for granted how intrinsically satellite systems are knit into nearly every aspect of modern life, as well as being fundamental to our economic system. For example, satellites power the GPS technology that many people use daily, allow people to surf the web and call friends, enable first responders to communicate with each other in times of crisis, and time-stamp transactions in the world financial market [34]. On the surface, this seems to point to a logistical convenience rather than military necessity, yet if an adversary were to monkey wrench this process, chaos could ensue similar to the toilet paper shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic—but likely with significantly more dire outcomes. Foreshadowing the events of November 16, 2021, author Michael Puttré cautioned, “A modern nation’s reliance on satellites—indeed, their indispensability—creates all the incentive needed for rivals to spend lavishly to develop ways to interfere with their operation or eliminate them. The United States, China, Russia, and India all have conducted destructive tests of anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons on test targets or obsolescent friendly satellites in LEO by hitting them with direct-ascent missiles launched from the ground, aircraft, or ships. Such tests, particularly those involving actual satellites as targets, tend to produce dangerous space debris that could threaten other satellites or the International Space Station” [26]. These recent events point to the necessity of the USSF to more adequately protect and regulate these vulnerable assets.

For many that support the Space Force, the US Military needs a concrete way to respond to these types of both public and foreign interest threats as well as to maintain supremacy in space. Many strategists feel space has become essential to our security and prosperity, so much so as to necessitate this branch of our military dedicated to its defense, just like we have branches of the military dedicated to protecting and securing the air, land, and sea. A massive focus of this new branch of the military so far has been securing the safety of American satellites. This is an idea echoed by the United

States’ unrivaled satellite presence in space. The US currently maintains 1,897 satellites in orbit, more than double the combined 887 satellites of the entire rest of the world [2]. In addition, Space Command is currently tracking 35,000 objects in low earth orbit, which is a 22 percent increase from 2019 [7]. The vast amount of US satellites necessitates unique measures in organizing and protecting them, which the USSF provides a potential solution to as an organization that is separate from the USAF and improves and streamlines the results of jobs previously done by the Air Force.

Adding to the growing concern of monitoring satellites and anti-satellite missile launches, General Raymond also believes that China and Russia are actively pursuing territory and dominion in space; “...we have had to move at light speed. We have had to completely reorganize the space domain. We have stripped levels of command and bureaucracy so that we can make decisions faster. There were over 65 entities that had a role in space and it was fragmented” [27]. Supporters of the USSF feel that the US is woefully behind the eight ball in terms of space dominance. In 2015, Russia combined its Space Force with its Air Force to create the Russian Aerospace Forces. That same year, China engaged in military reorganization called the PLA Strategic Support Force which marries cyber and space warfare [22]. Besides beating the US to establishing a Space Force, Dean Cheng, Senior Research Fellow in Heritage’s Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy, states, “Shockingly, [Russia and China] both have some basic abilities that we do not.” Additionally, he stresses how adversaries in space operate both in war and peace. “In peacetime, interference with satellite systems would affect everything from ordering from Amazon to use of a credit card at the gas pump. In wartime, interference with communication to US satellites would be detrimental” [15]. This points to an important role for the USSF not just in maintaining satellites, but as a means for securing and maintaining military superiority in space.

Air Force and Space Force culture, and whether there might be overlap and differences between the two, is a point of curiosity and contention. Robert Farley with the CATO Institute argues that organizational culture “is an important determinant to military effectiveness,” because it establishes an organization as well as personnel’s identity. Of course, the Space Force cannot develop its own organizational culture overnight, especially compared to military branches that have been operating for over 60 years, but Farley feels that Air Force culture will accompany the Space Force. The Space Force has developed its own uniforms, changed the AF term “Wings” to “Deltas”, and has its own insignia [12].

Still, critics of the USSF exist. For one, some feel that the USSF may be currently unwarranted or excessively preemptive. However, as Lt Col Brad Townsend writes, “Their concerns are also much closer to being met than it first appears. The first unmet condition...the reality is that an accepted and comprehensive space power theory is impossible given the paucity of real-world experience of conflict in space...the second unmet condition—the inability to produce direct combat effects in and from space—is

possible to reframe based on the fundamental logic that led to the development of the condition” [30].

Because a stand-alone military service [the Space Force], even if within the Air Force, will need its own hierarchy, doctrine, schools, uniforms and everything else under the sun that goes with a stand-alone organization — including, perhaps, marching bands — we will spend lots of time in the early years simply building it, at a cost- the Pentagon estimates at \$2 billion over five years. Brookings Institute, Michael Hallon.

Additionally, the formation of the USSF is not without conflict; it is without argument that certain problems face the USSF now that it has been established. For instance, there are the logistical problems that come with being a budding department of the US military. A robust and unique workplace culture, decades of streamlined logistics, and other benefits that come naturally with age must be deliberately constructed within the Space Force to have it operating at maximum capacity. These logistical problems may impact other branches of the military as well. For instance, as a division of the Air Force, the USSF has the potential to confuse the process of budget allocation, as its budget must be passed through the total Air Force budget.

The Air Force is not getting funded at its published budget level because of the pass-through. Consequently, the public, many lawmakers, and Pentagon leadership have the impression that the Department of the Air Force is actually getting more money than it in fact receives. Discounting the pass-through, the Air Force’s \$165.5 billion budget in the 2020 budget is significantly less than the Navy’s \$191.4 billion or the Army’s \$205.6 billion. Today, with a budget topline of \$204.8 billion the Air Force looks “on par” with the other services [21].

The USSF’s current lack of streamlined budgeting, as well as the sudden and massive demand for qualified Space Force personnel, could mean a threat to national security, retired Lt. General Deptula argues [21].

For all military forces, space is a secondary domain concern because the US Armed Services have a primary domain of responsibility. The Air Force has resource concerns that it funds most unclassified space systems, which other branches rely on. Former Air Force Chief of Staff General Michael Ryan acknowledged that the Air Force “can’t afford to be the bank for all space systems,” and that “space is not a welfare system.” Alternatively, Todd Harrison, Director, Defense Budget Analysis, Director, Aerospace Security Project and Senior Fellow, International Security Program states, “The Air Force would never say the same thing about its aviation programs” [14]. Currently, this area of logistical conflict is where the majority of problems for the Space Force arise. This includes the direction of the creation of a new department, recruiting and training personnel, acquiring and consolidating other space-related defense operations, and having a material way to measure its worth and success.

In addition to logistical problems, there also exist more long-term issues for the defense of space, which the USSF is created to respond to and must grapple with. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) makes the case that space is currently competitive, congested, and contested, making these three issues top priorities for long-term US operations in space. As the dilemma of competition stands, a problem that will need to be addressed in the long term is that the profit and usage of space is overwhelmingly funded by and directed to private industry, which is much more difficult to control than directly government-funded space operations. A stronger focus on space as a strategic military asset, while still allowing the private American space industry to flourish, is absolutely essential for responding to the competitiveness of space [29].

Another issue is the more practical roadblock of congestion. As the CRS puts it, “there are a limited number of “slots” available for satellite operations, especially in GEO,” an issue exacerbated by highly-requested areas of space (not all locations are equally valuable) as well as issues of radio frequency allocation, not to mention free-floating space debris which threatens the safety and stability of satellites is currently very difficult to respond to. Optimizing these congested “lanes” of satellites remains an incredibly important long-term mission for the USSF [29].

Finally, the last long-term variable is the disputed nature of space; this appears to be the sentiment that countries like China and Russia share. As the military restrictions currently existing on space were established in the Cold War era, their legitimacy and relevance are increasingly being questioned by these international players. The forming of the National Space Defense Center was a response to this problem, focusing on the US’s security flaws in space and how best to prepare for attacks on US space systems. However, whether now is the time to capitalize on such a future asset is a matter of significant debate. This was raised recently by Congressman Jared Huffman in his bill, “No Militarization of Space Act”, which he ironically timed to coincide with Congress trying to pass the National Defense Authorization Act authorizing funding for the military [16].

Some critics feel the USSF is unnecessary, since operations have always been under the Air Force, and the concern exists that a new branch would only serve to complicate bureaucracy and inflate costs. Yet, as this fledgling outfit navigates its roles and responsibilities, proponents and cynics must give this new establishment time to make its mark. As a budding organization designed to tackle new and oft-misunderstood challenges, as well as a branch that must create a military framework for space operations for the future, the Space Force requires the support of the defense community going forward to be fully actualized into the successful branch it is designed to be. For the majority, the time of the USSF is here. See Figure 3 for a summation of the support versus objections to the Space Force.

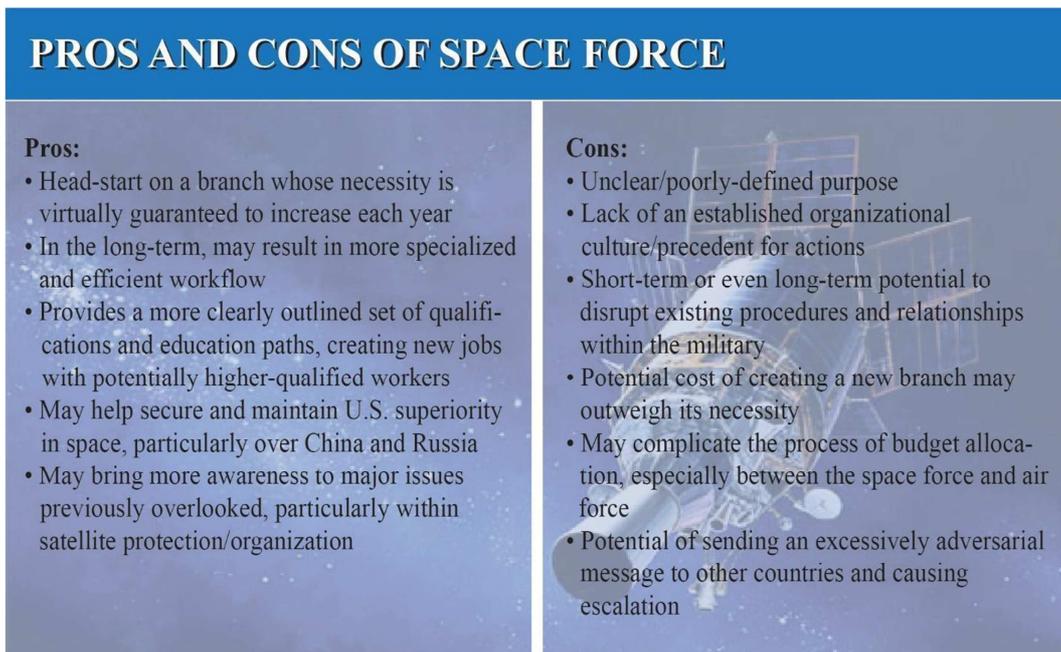


Figure 3. C/O Xavier Dawson.

6. The Future of the USSF

The National Security Act, a foundational document, had divisiveness in its early iterations, but it at least did not have the scrutiny and public relations challenges of combating commercial interests, entertainment reality shows, and fashion critiques of uniforms while managing US military and intelligence concerns. While it is not surprising that the USSF has drawn scrutiny—as the NSA did in its first few years—the USSF has had to compete with Star Trek’s William Shatner and billionaire Elon Musk’s private adventures in space and the streaming comedy *Space Force* starring Steve Carell in General Raymond’s role. Despite these distractions, the USSF, just like the NSA in 1947, is a new entity that is attempting to look into the future for wartime, peacekeeping, and authority over a limitless new frontier.

The growth of space tourism, which is connected to entertainment and public relations, has added a bizarre variable into managing space operations. Currently, privateers and celebrities with a large social media following are grabbing the space spotlight. Certainly, the UN Secretary-General suggesting taxing “billionaires joyriding in space” is an attempt to make sense of and grapple with a landscape that no one has mapped out. The UN Secretary-General is agitated about Wall Street and billionaire investment in the space industry. On the other hand, it echoes a sparked and renewed interest in the field among Americans and possible strong recruitment potential at the Pentagon’s youngest branch [13].

“There is a ton of excitement across America on space in all sectors,” said General John Raymond, the US Space Force’s chief of operations, when asked by CNBC about the strides made by private space companies like Elon Musk’s

SpaceX. “I’ve talked about people knocking on our door wanting to come into the Space Force in numbers greater than what we have slots to fill. I’ve talked in the past about how universities are seeing more students apply for space STEM degrees, which I think is going to be great for our nation,” Raymond added. “I’m excited about all of it, both what we’re doing here on national security and what’s going on in the commercial industry that we can leverage the advantage” [20].

7. Conclusion

Like the National Security Act, the Space Force’s founding is coming at a point when expectations of war are changing. The post-WWII world was on the precipice for change and the NSA was a bold and far-reaching effort to apply the lessons learned from WWII and prevent military and intelligence threats in the future. Perhaps author Richard Betts captures the NSA’s mission best; “The bumper sticker for the main effects of the 1947 Act would be coordinating pluralism” [4]. The NSA was necessary as America’s post-WWII leadership was critical in political, economic, and military advancements and stability.

The post-WWII world is similar to the rapid changes seemingly occurring on the space frontier today; General Raymond has referred to space as the new Wild West. “This is why the Space Force and the Space Command are so important. We’ve had the luxury, we’ve had the absolute luxury since the end of the cold war to really operate in a domain that wasn’t contested. We were able to focus on integrating space into operations around the globe... a wake-up call came in 2007 when China blew up one of their own satellites and blew it into 3,000 pieces of debris that we still track today...it’s an extremely challenging and dynamic time” [8].

Just like a new global order is emerging in Space, the NSA had to meet similar challenges on the world stage in 1946; Russia, an ally in WWII, was imposing Communist regimes and insurrections, detonating an atomic bomb, and launching Sputnik. Western Europe was in a severe depression while Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin encouraged North Korea's invasion of South Korea. American leadership and exceptionalism had to be maintained. Inspired by the recovering, if not booming American economy, the threat of the Cold War and growth of the post-New-Deal government necessitated equipping the US to integrate diplomatic, military, intelligence, and economic power to prevent another WWII and Pearl Harbor, and to shape the future. As the stories of the NSA and the establishment of the Space Force continue to mirror one another, one could say the Space Force has become the new edge of the world—though this may sound dramatic, it is difficult to overstate the importance of its operations and success.

The average American...before you have your first cup of coffee [in the morning], you have used space on several occasions. We operate the GPS constellation, we operate communication satellites, missile warning satellites, we launch those satellites into orbit, we acquire those satellites, and more importantly today, we protect and defend those satellites, because they have become so critical for our nation and for our military...it's a complete cradle-to-grave, from acquiring to launching to operating those capabilities, to tracking...to acting as the space traffic control for the world...to integrating those capabilities into operations of every single service and joint partner we have, and to make sure that...when America needs space, it is always there." [33].

To provide and equip America to maintain its effectiveness on the world stage, the creation of the Space Force may well prove to be as necessary a change to military structure as the NSA was in its time. Though this is not guaranteed to be smooth sailing from the very beginning—for instance, although the National Security Act has proven to be the bedrock of policy and security, it has been extensively amended and added to over the past 60 years—the future looks bright for the newly established USSF. While Washington finally accepted the NSA, the misunderstood new military branch is also here to stay, and Washington has moved on to debating whether the next defense authorization bill should establish a Space National Guard, and thankfully, not the style of USSF uniforms.

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Biography

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