

Trump Signs Measure Enabling Establishment of a U.S. Space Force

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President Trump has signed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2020 that establishes a U.S. Space Force as the sixth branch of the U.S. armed forces—despite the Outer Space Treaty designating space as a global commons to be used for peaceful purposes.

[Reported Space News](#): “Trump signed the NDAA flanked by top defense and military officials at a ceremony at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland.” It quoted Trump saying: “Today marks a landmark achievement as we officially inaugurate the newest branch of our military, the U.S. Space Force. This is very big and important moment.”

The *Space News* article quoted U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper saying at the signing December 20:

“Our reliance on space-based capabilities has grown dramatically and today outer space has evolved into a warfighting domain of its own. Maintaining American dominance in that domain is now the mission of the United States Space Force.”

Bruce Gagnon, the coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space, headquartered in Maine, said of what happened:

“The words ‘warfighting domain’ and US ‘dominance in space’ indicate that the Pentagon is actively planning to fight a war in space. This misguided notion is probably the most dangerous and frightening development of my lifetime—and I had thought the Cold War-era was bad. The idea that the U.S. thinks it can fight and ‘win’ a war in space is indeed the height of insanity.”

The U.S. Congress joining with the Trump administration “to push forward with this ‘US exceptionalism to the max’ notion indicates just how much the aerospace industry has taken control of Washington,” Gagnon, of Brunswick, Maine, continued.

“It is clear to me that what the Pentagon has long called ‘the largest, and most expensive industrial project in human history—‘Star Wars,’ will drive our nation’s economy over the cliff,” said Gagnon. “There will be rockets and weapons in space and more homeless across the nation than anyone could ever imagine. Yes, we should call it Pyramids to the Heavens. The aerospace industry is the contemporary version of the Pharaohs of Egypt and the taxpayers will be the slaves. But everything has an Achilles Heel and the

enormous cost of Star Wars could just be it.”

He stated:

“It’s more than the right time for the public to declare a resounding NO.”

The formation of a U.S. Space Force and the U.S. drive for “American dominance” of space will inevitably turn space into a war zone because other nations, China and Russia and then more, will respond in kind. There will be an arms race in space.

The landmark Outer Space Treaty of 1967 was put together by the U.S., the former Soviet Union, and the U.K., and since signed by most nations on Earth. It was spurred, as Craig Eisendrath, as a U.S. State Department officer involved in its creation, by the Soviet Union launching Sputnik, the first space satellite, as he noted in the 2001 TV documentary I wrote and narrate, “Star Wars Returns.” It’s online. See [this](#). Eisendrath said “we sought to de-weaponize space before it got weaponized...to keep war out of space.”

The Outer Space Treaty prohibits the placement of weapons of mass destruction in space, and although the Trump administration and U.S. military have been claiming a Space Force is necessary because of Russia and China moving into space militarily, in fact Russia and China —and U.S. neighbor Canada—have been leaders for decades in pushing for an expansion of the Outer Space Treaty. They have been advocating the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) treaty under which the placement of any weapons in space would be barred. The U.S.—under both Republican and Democratic presidential administrations—has opposed the PAROS treaty and has effectively vetoed it at the United Nations. (I’ve been there to see this.)

“Today is an historic moment for our nation as we launch the United States Space Force,” Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett told reporters Dec. 20,” said the Space News article. “The Space Force is the first new military service created since 1947, when the Air Force was born from the U.S. Army Air Corps,” it continued.

“The Space Force authorization marks a huge political victory for Trump, who started championing the idea of a space service in early 2018 and directed the Pentagon in June 2018 to figure out a plan to make it happen,” said Space News, quoting Barrett as saying: “The president’s vision has become a reality with overwhelming bipartisan and bicameral support from Congress.” Raymond: “We do have a plan to rename the principal Air Force bases that house space units to be space bases.”

In a subsequent article, *Space News* reported that with the establishment of a U.S. Space Force, there is a plan to rename U.S. Air Force bases as U.S. Space Force bases. The piece said:

“Air Force installations that primarily do space work would be renamed Space Force bases. Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, for example, could become Peterson Space Force Base. Other candidates for re-designation include Colorado-based Schriever Air Force Base and Buckley Air Force Base, Patrick Air Force Base in Florida and Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.”

The article quoted General John “Jay” Raymond, who has been commander of the U.S. Space Command and has become commander of the new U.S. Space Force, as saying: “We do have a plan to rename the principal Air Force bases that house space units to be space bases.” See [this](#).

Meanwhile, the U.S. military immediately unveiled an “official” U.S. Space Force [website](#).

In the U.S. House of Representatives, the vote for NDAA on December 11 was 377 to 48. Some 189 Republicans and 188 Democrats voted for it. Six Republican House members voted no along with 41 Democrats and one independent. The vote was reported to be a result of a trade-off for 12 weeks of paid parental leave for civilian federal employees. *The New York Times*’ article on the vote said Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law and advisor, was pivotal. “It was Mr. Kushner who helped broker a deal to create the Space Force, a chief priority of the president’s, in exchange for the paid parental leave, a measure championed by his wife, Ivanka Trump, also a senior advisor to the president,” said *The Times*. See [this](#).

The vote in the U.S. Senate on December 17 was 86 to 8. Some 48 Republicans and 37 Democrats and one independent voted for it. Four Republicans and four Democrats voted no.

Trump tweeted after the House vote: “Wow! All our priorities have made it into the final NDAA: Pay Raises for our Troops, Rebuilding our Military, Paid Parental Leave, Border Security, and Space Force!” See [this](#).

The *Space News* article went on:

“Getting Congress to go along with the Space Force authorization took significant cajoling from the White House.” The House Armed Services Committee “unsuccessfully tried to pass a bill in the 2018 NDAA to establish a Space Corps. The Pentagon, the Air Force and the Senate at the time were adamantly opposed but all came around after Trump took up the cause.”

“To get Democrats to vote for the NDAA,” *Space News* said, “Trump went along with one of their top priorities to grant federal workers 12 weeks of paid time off after the birth or adoption of a child or to handle family health emergencies.”

It was a trade-off of the most profound historic proportions: paid parental leave for government employees, common in countries all over the world, for a measure that would turn space into an arena of war.

Effective as of December 2019, reported *Space News*, “The Air Force re-names the Air Force Space Command the U.S. Space Force....As many as 16,000 military and civilian personnel from Air Force Space Command will be assigned to the U.S. Space Force....Air Force Gen. John “Jay” Raymond, the commander of U.S. Space Command, will serve as the first Chief of Space Operations...chief of staff of the Space Force” and “become a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by December 2020. The Office of the Chief of Space Operations—aka the Space Force headquarters—will be stood up at the Pentagon over the next 60 days.”

Further, there will be “a new Senate-confirmed position of assistant secretary of the Air Force for space acquisition and integration” and a “Space Force Acquisition Council”....The space acquisition executive will oversee the Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC), the

Space Rapid Capabilities Office and the Space Development Agency.”

Space News said General “Raymond told reporters Dec. 20 that the establishment of a Space Force ‘truly launches us into a new era.’ However, there are still ‘thousands of actions will have to take place’ over the coming months and years.”

“‘The uniforms, the patch, the song, the culture of a service, that work will continue,’ Raymond said,” the article went on. “We’re not going to be in a rush. That’s not something that we’re going to roll out on day one. Communicating to the public the importance of the Space Force to national security will be a priority, he said. Raymond is aware that the Space Force is mocked and called a ‘Space Farce’ and he thinks that is a problem. ‘This is not a ‘farce,’ he said. ‘This is nationally critical.’”

As to: “Will there be ‘spacemen’?” asked *Space News*, a trade journal. “How the members of the Space Force will be designated will be debated for some time before the service settles on a name. For now, the new branch will be formed with airmen assigned to serve under the Space force. A new name will be given to members of the Space Force eventually. ‘We want to develop our own identity,’ a senior official said. ‘We don’t want to say on day one ‘they’re going to be called x.’ Eventually, airmen will be asked to permanently transfer to the Space Force. The estimated 16,000 people who will be expected to transfer include 3,400 officers, 6,200 enlisted personnel and the rest civilians.”

“Graduates of the military academies of the other services will be allowed to commission into the Space Force,” reported *Space News*. “The actual transfer of airmen to the Space Force will be a laborious process that will require standing up a new personnel and compensation system. Each airman individually will have to volunteer to be separated from the Air Force. Officers would have to be reappointed and enlisted personnel would have to be re-enlisted to serve under the Space Force.”

“The Army is of special importance because it has a large cadre of space operators and experts estimated at more than 2,000 people,” the *Space News* article continued. “Barrett said the plan is to eventually bring them on. ‘Naturally the Army and Navy will be partners,’ she said. ‘Over time they will be fully engaged.’ She said Army and Navy officials have been involved in the planning and rollout of the Space Force. Barrett also wants to figure out a plan for National Guard and Reserve units to serve on the Space Force.”

As to “how much money will the Space Force have”—what Bruce Gagnon of the Global Network calls the “Achilles Heel” of the scheme—*Space News* said “Congress approved \$40 million for Space Force operations and maintenance in the fiscal year 2020 appropriations. That is less than the \$72.4 million requested by the Trump administration, although Barrett said Dec. 20 that the funding would be enough to get started...In a Dec. 2 memo, a copy of which was obtained by *SpaceNews*,” the article went on, “Barrett requested the following transfers to the Space Force for fiscal year 2020: \$9.3 billion from Air Force space-related weapons systems and operations, \$1.4 billion from weapons system sustainment, \$275 million from major command support, \$26.3 million from education and training, \$95 million from headquarters spending. Barrett said the personnel costs associated with all these programs also will transfer to the Space Force.”

[National Public Radio has reported](#) that Trump’s advocacy of a Space Force “started as a

joke.” NPR’s Claudia Grisales in August related: “Early last year President Trump riffed on an idea he called ‘Space Force’ before a crowd of Marines in San Diego. It drew laughs, but the moment was a breakthrough for a plan that had languished for nearly 20 years.” She continued: “‘I said maybe we need a new force, we’ll call it the Space Force,’ Trump said at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in March 2018. ‘And I was not really serious. Then I said, ‘What a great idea, maybe we’ll have to do that.’”

Gagnon recounts a protest he organized against the weaponization of space at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida in 1989 at which Apollo astronaut Edgar Mitchell, the sixth man to walk on the moon participated, told those present that “any war in space would be the one and only. By destroying satellites in space massive amounts of space debris would be created that would cause a cascading effect and even the billion-dollar International Space Station would likely be broken into tiny bits. So much space junk would be created, Mitchell told us, that we’d never be able to get a rocket off the planet again because of the minefield of debris orbiting the Earth at 15,000 mph. That would mean activity on Earth below would immediately shut down—cell phones, ATM machines, cable TV, traffic lights, weather prediction and more—all hooked up to satellites, would be lost. Modern society would go dark.”

As to the weapons a Space Force might use, proposed for Reagan’s “Star Wars” program were hypervelocity guns, particle beams and laser weapons onboard orbiting battle platforms with onboard nuclear reactors or “super” plutonium systems providing the power for the weapons. General James Abramson, head of “Star Wars,” or as it was officially termed Strategic Defense Initiative, said at a Symposium on Space Nuclear Power and Propulsion in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1988 that “without reactors in orbit” there would need to be “a long” extension cord bringing up power up from Earth.

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