

Statement of Intent
Air Force-NRO Relationship

JUN 7 2006

PURPOSE: Both internal and external changes have caused the Air Force (AF) and National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) to explore ways to work more effectively together, leverage lessons learned and unique strengths, and address common issues of concern in the areas of development, acquisition and operation of National Security Space systems. Both organizations recognize the need to enhance their respective capabilities, as well as to work collaboratively to respond to future challenges.

ORGANIZATIONAL & STRATEGIC INTENT: The AF and NRO conducted a range of discussions in an effort to develop viable options and trade space related to this critical relationship. As a result, the AF and NRO have identified and reached consensus on several near-term proposals to enhance AF/NRO relations, space capabilities and mission performance. Specifically, the AF and NRO, in coordination with the USD(I), have agreed on the following:

#1 – SENIOR AF LEADER ROLE IN NRO / SENIOR NRO LEADER

ROLE IN AIR FORCE

The AF agrees to assign an additional two-star general officer to the NRO to serve as the “Deputy Director, NRO” or “DDNRO.” The DDNRO will serve as the third person in the leadership line of succession behind the Director of the NRO (DNRO) and Principal Deputy Director of the NRO (PDDNRO). Primary duties will include:

- (1) Senior Military Advisor to the DNRO;
- (2) AF Element Commander (AFELEM/CC) for all AF personnel assigned to NRO with ADCON responsibilities to the Commander, AF Space Command (AFSPC/CC);¹
- (3) NRO’s representative to AFSPC/CC for AF Space Professional Development actions [Note: AFSPC/CC serves as the AF’s Space Professional Functional Authority (SPFA)];
- (4) Designated PEO duties (as assigned).

NOTE: Additional details regarding the DDNRO position are provided in Attachment 1.

¹ All personnel assigned to the NRO are under the Operational Control (OPCON) of the DNRO, who has authoritative direction over all aspects of NRO operations and activities. As such, AF personnel assigned to the NRO will fully support the DNRO and the NRO mission. The fact that Administrative Control (ADCON) chain exists as specified herein for CIA, AF and USN personnel does not derogate this guiding tenet of the NRO.

The NRO agrees to assign a senior NRO leader (one-star civilian equivalent) to HQ AFSPC as the “Deputy Director of Air, Space and Information Operations” or “AFSPC/DA3.” As the AFSPC/DA3, primary duties will include:

- (1) Senior NRO Advisor to the AFSPC/CC;
- (2) Permanent Deputy to the Director, AFSPC/A3;
- (3) Provide operations policy and guidance, concepts of operations, and emergency action procedures for all AFSPC space and missile forces in the areas of command & control, missile warning, space surveillance, space control, ICBM, spacelift, navigation, weather and communication.

#2 – COMBINED AF-NRO SPACE ASSIGNMENT ADVISORY BOARD

Both organizations agree to the establishment of a Space Assignment Advisory Board to oversee assignments of all Air Force Credentialed Space Professionals (CSPs) to include those assigned to the NRO. This board, comprised of AFSPC and NRO O-6s representing the primary space-related career fields (acquisition, operations, communications, and intelligence), will be co-chaired by the AFSPC/CV and DDNRO and be responsible to the AFSPC/CC in the commander’s role as the AF SPFA. The Board will meet twice annually with the objective of implementing SPFA guidance related to assignments for all CSPs O-5 and below.

This objective is to strengthen the oversight and career development for all AF CSPs by leveraging existing AF assignment processes. The overarching goal is to enhance the experience of personnel in both organizations, allowing individuals to gain appreciation for the strengths and systems of the two organizations, and to develop a larger pool of senior space leaders with operations and acquisition experience in both communities. It also offers the potential to provide a proper balance of AF space professional manning and experience levels, and provides clear guidance on assignment designations—“must fill,” “priority fill,” etc. Increased cooperation between AFSPC and NRO, in conjunction with AFPC Assignment Teams and “Green Door” Assignments, will foster better use of CSPs by both organizations.

#3 – SPACE OPERATIONS

The AF and NRO acknowledge, with increasing concern that the nature and pace of emerging threats to space is increasing. In response, both organizations, in concert with the responsible Combatant Commander (USSTRATCOM), must be able to react in a more unified, real-time manner in the face of such threats. The objective is to build on the current JSpOC/NROC relationship by increasing insight into the current operational status of AF and NRO space assets for strategic and operational level decision-makers. As a first step, USSTRATCOM’s ability to respond to imminent space threats should be strengthened by assigning the Commander, Joint Space Operations (CDR JSO) the authority to initiate contingency response actions for all AF and NRO on-orbit assets. Specifically, the intent is to take appropriate measures to protect satellites and respond to threats, not to be confused with mission operations and/or tasking of NRO assets. Towards this end, the AF and NRO will establish common criteria and conditions that would warrant emergency operational response(s) needed to protect National Security Space systems, as well as ensure a mechanism by which a designated authority would initiate such action for all AF and NRO space assets. Additionally, both organizations will pursue the designation and equipping

of the JSpOC and NROC as respective backup facilities to each other to further strengthen AF and NRO satellite operations. Additional steps to improve the operational relationship between USSTRATCOM and the NRO are also underway. Finally, in addition to operating space systems assigned to Air Force Space Command, Air Force personnel serving in the NRO already play a significant role in overseeing the operation of NRO space systems. Both organizations agree to pursue a test program to integrate satellite operations (but not payload tasking) in a specific mission area with the aim of assessing the feasibility of expanding to additional mission areas in the future.

#4 – LAUNCH OPERATIONS

There is a long history of cooperation and interdependence between the AF, NRO and industry for launching national security payloads. Likewise, it is clear to both organizations there are valuable lessons to be learned from the current sustained, record-breaking launch success rate. Both organizations must maintain an unwavering focus on mission success, while sharing best practices and operationalizing lessons learned. Towards this end, the AF and NRO will assess existing mission assurance processes, contracts and facilities, associated with launch, in an effort to better understand current practices and opportunities for closer cooperation and common “best practices.” Additionally, the two organizations will expand ongoing Mission Assurance Task Force activities and conduct a Manpower Engineering Team study of AF and NRO resources dedicated to launch, to better understand the unique needs in this arena.

SUMMARY:

This Statement of Intent documents the important work the AF and NRO are undertaking to ensure its historical relationship remains strong, while both organizations continue to effectively achieve mission success and meet user needs. The recommendation is to proceed and implement the near-term efforts outlined above by updating appropriate Charters, DoD Directives, MOAs, MOUs, etc. Once complete, this effort will represent a significant step in strengthening the AF-NRO relationship via measured, actionable steps.

Finally, the AF and NRO are committed to delivering—along with the various mission partners across the Intelligence Community and Department of Defense—world-class support to both joint warfighters and national intelligence users alike. It is important to note that the steps outlined in this document also strengthen the ties between the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) by addressing several areas of common concern. Specifically, this plan is meant to bring stability to current and future AF assignments to/from the NRO, as well as permit joint development of critical space capabilities. While the improved collaboration and communication created by this dialogue proved effective, to build on the progress to date, the AF and NRO must, and will, continue to identify new areas for improvement.



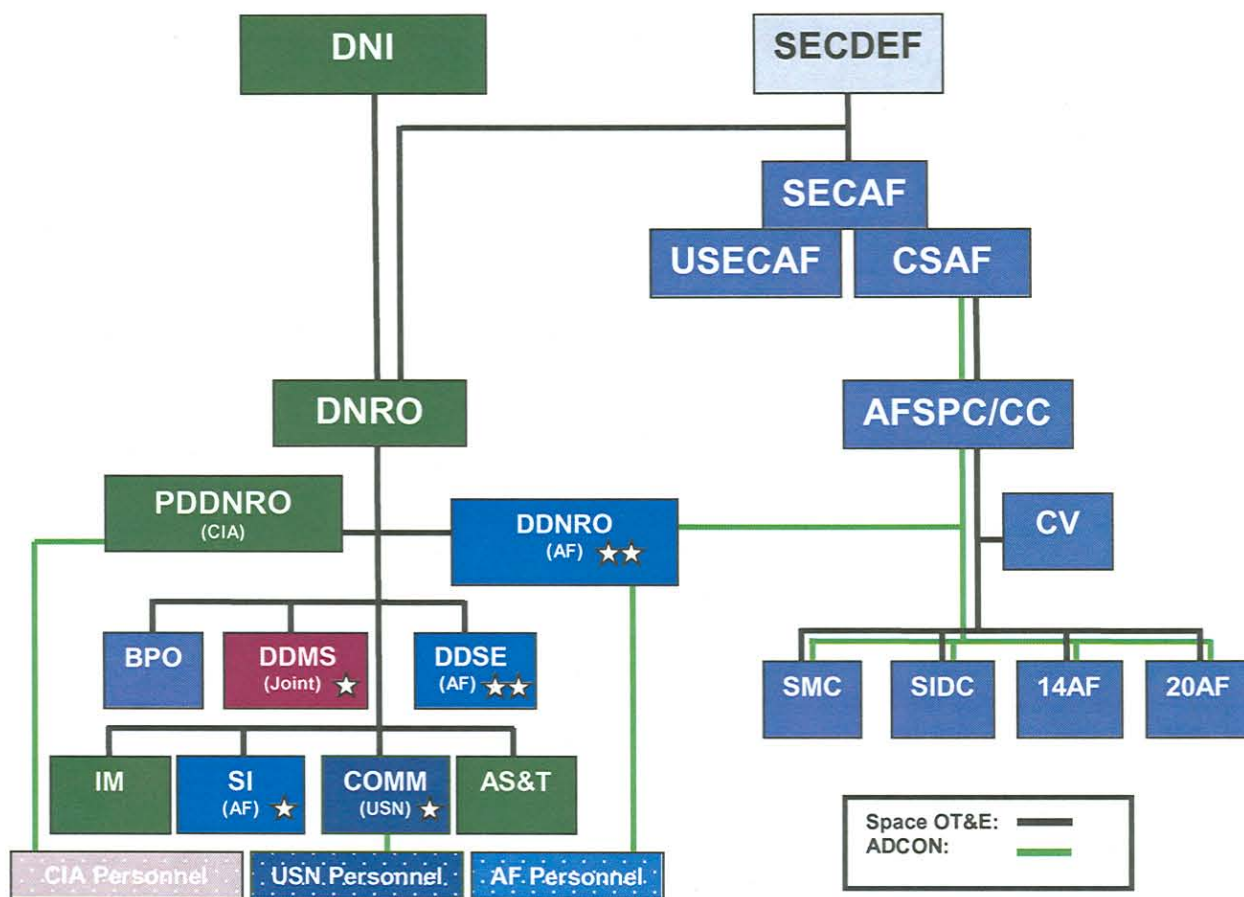
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Attachment 1

The new DDNRO will have responsibilities as depicted in the organizational chart below.



As the AFELEM/CC, the DDNRO will be part of the AF administrative control (ADCON) chain over all AF personnel assigned to the NRO. ADCON will include authority for traditional administrative actions involving the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), personnel management (performance evaluations, assignments, selection boards, promotion processes), individual education/training and disciplinary processes.

- (a) UCMJ Authorities: Traditional UCMJ authority for non-judicial punishment rests with each individual's AF unit commander. Currently, for courts-martial of Air Force personnel assigned to the NRO, the 11 WG/CC is the Special Courts-Martial (SPCM) Convening Authority and the AFDW/CC is the General Courts-Martial (GCM) Convening Authority. In future, the SPCM and GCM authorities will reside within AFSPC/CC channels.

- (b) Performance Evaluations: Existing evaluation rating chains of command would remain in place and be integrated into the AFSPC rating structure, similar to the current Numbered Air Force (NAF) rating structure.
- (c) Assignments: For assignments of O-5 and below, see Proposal #2 (Combined AF-NRO Space Assignment Advisory Board). For Senior Leader (O-6 and above) assignments, the objective is increased coordination between the NRO's Senior Leader Office and AFSPC's Senior Leader Development Office (AFSPC/A1L). AFSPC/CC, in close coordination with DNRO and DDNRO, will have appropriate insight and make final recommendation to the CSAF for all senior AF Credentialed Space Professionals (CSPs) to include those assigned to/from the NRO. Towards this end, AFSPC/CC in his role as the SPFA would look to AFSPC/A1L to serve as the single interface with AF/DPO for senior space leader issues.
- (d) Selection Boards: Extensive cooperation exists and will continue for the Vigilant Eagle (Squadron Commander) selection process. For the Command Screening Board (CSB) process, representation of NRO CSB requirements will be strengthened by both aligning them with AFSPC requirements and establishing the DDNRO as a CSB voting member at the AF-level (currently, the NRO has no representation to the AF-level CSB).
- (e) Management Level Review (MLR) Process: Currently, the NRO and AFSPC hold separate MLRs as part of the officer promotion process. Given the limited number of AF officers assigned to the NRO, a combined MLR process seems prudent in that it would broaden the pool of candidates and minimize the administrative overhead. The objective is to transition from the separate NRO and AFSPC MLR processes into a single MLR process led by the AFSPC/CV.

Additionally, the DDNRO will serve as the NRO representative for all AF Space Professional Development Program (SPDP) activities and will be a member of the SPFA Advisory Council. Specifically, the DDNRO will be responsible to the AFSPC/CC as the SPFA, in four areas:

- (1) Identification of Credentialed Space Professional members and billets;
- (2) Space experience coding and tracking;
- (3) Space professional certification program; and
- (4) Education and training opportunities.

The details relating to this and the other duties above will be codified in a MOA between AFSPC and NRO.