



**Statement for the Record of Dr. Troy E. Meink  
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**House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces  
Hearing on “Fiscal Year 2025 National Security Space Programs”**

**Wednesday, May 1, 2024**

Chairman Lamborn, Ranking Member Moulton, and members of the subcommittee... it is a pleasure to appear before you today with my colleagues ... and to represent the people of the National Reconnaissance Office.

For more than 60 years, the NRO has been developing tools and techniques that advance our national security. Today we are building on that legacy of innovation to make the United States even safer and stronger. Space-based intelligence has become a primary, if not the primary, means of collection in denied areas.

This is especially critical as our competitors are seeking to deny our strategic intelligence advantage. With Congress’s support, and with the continued innovation of the NRO’s talented workforce and trusted partnerships, we will ensure America retains its strategic advantage in space.

Our FY25 budget request aims to keep the United States the world’s leader in space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, or ISR. It prioritizes investment in a diverse and resilient constellation to meet the needs of all intelligence customers, including warfighters and allies.

We are committed to using taxpayer dollars effectively and efficiently. I’m proud to report that our commitment to fiscal accountability earned the NRO our 15th consecutive clean financial statement audit for Fiscal Year 2023.

Our effectiveness and efficiency are the result of the flexibility afforded to us under the authorities of both Title 10 and Title 50, as the NRO is a member of both the Defense Intelligence Enterprise and the Intelligence Community.

Our investments in tools and technology—both on the ground and on orbit—ensure our customers get the information they need, where they need it, faster than ever before. We enable real-time decision-making to protect the nation and our allies.

With the support of Congress, the NRO will continue to invest in government-engineered, industry-built satellites that are resilient by design; partnerships that allow us to maximize our impact; and developing the world’s most advanced tools, information technology, and communications networks – allowing us to fuse critical data and deliver it to our customers anywhere on Earth.



Over the next decade, the NRO will continue to increase the number of satellites operating across multiple orbits – not just large, very capable, exquisite systems, but also smaller, proliferated systems.

Later this month, the first phase of our proliferated architecture is currently scheduled to launch as NROL-146. We've already launched a number of demonstrations over the last few years to verify cost and performance, but this will be the first launch of the operational system. These systems will increase timeliness of access, diversify communications pathways, and enhance our resilience.

For our ground systems and more exquisite on-orbit capabilities, we are strengthening our cyber defenses, eliminating single points of failure, and hardening our architecture. This will also enable systems to be more resilient.

The NRO has been at the forefront of innovation since our inception, and today that culture of innovation is as strong as ever.

Our highly skilled workforce of military and civilians brings diverse viewpoints and innovative ideas to solve complex intelligence challenges.

One example – we are using artificial intelligence and machine learning to manage capabilities within our constellations. This enables us to deliver data at speed and in the most efficient way possible to support both analysts and warfighters.

Partnerships are inherent in who we are. Our workforce is a blend of government civilians and members of every military service. As we evolve to meet changing mission needs, we look forward to continued collaboration on personnel support from our civilian and military partners.

We maximize our impact when we partner with our colleagues across the intelligence and defense communities to leverage every possible innovation and optimize our collective talents, tools, and effectiveness.

For example, our partnership with U.S. Space Force, and previously the Air Force, on launch procurement has provided assured access to space for NRO's systems for over 15 years. We are fully committed to Phase 3 of the National Security Space Launch Program. The U.S. Space Force has been a great partner in incorporating our needs into the contract with Lane 1 and Lane 2 options.

Our continued success depends on our ability to adapt and to innovate, and on Congress' continued support for our mission. New technology, new partnerships, and the talents of our workforce are critical to maintaining our competitive advantage and keeping America safe. On behalf of the entire NRO workforce, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to answering your questions.