



A Fireside Chat with Col. Christopher Putman, Commander SPACECENT

March 27, 2023

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Welcome to Air & Space Warfighters in Action. I'm Orville Wright, President and CEO of your Air & Space Forces Association. It's an honor to be here in person with all of you and thank you to many, many more of you for joining us online. Our guest today is Colonel Christopher "Chris" Putman, the very first commander of U.S. Space Forces Central, which activated as a component of U.S. Central Command on December 2nd, 2022. Based out of MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, SPACECENT is focused on the continuous integration of space across Central Command's area of responsibility, which stretches from the Middle East to Southeast Asia. It is one of three Space Force components to stand up since the new service was formed, joining Space Forces Indo-Pacific and Space Forces Korea.

Prior to taking command, Chris served as Director of Space Forces for Air Force's Central Command and Pacific Air Forces, as well as the Director of Future Operations for the U.S. Space Force, working for then Lieutenant General Salty Saltzman. He also previously commanded the 12th Space Warning Squadron at Thule Air Base Greenland among other assignments. Chris, Colonel Putman, thank you so much for being here. We have industry slides showing on the monitors, and I also want to give special thanks to our sponsors who are listed on the screens flanking the stage. Without their support as industry leaders, Warfighters in Action would not be possible.

So all right, with that, let's get to it, and give Chris a chance to talk about the incredible work he and his relatively small team do every day, probably 24 by seven. SPACECENT is nearly four months old now. What are your biggest priorities as you continue to develop the conformant and command?

Col. Christopher Putman:

Sure. I think I got three major priorities and maybe like three and a half, four. So I'll start with number one, is support the current fight. I think as most people are tracking SPACECENT, the Guardians came out of AFCENT, so we had a mission 24/7 to support CENTCOM through the air component. As we stand up a new organization and do all the things it takes to create a new organization, we can't drop the ball on the current fight 24/7. Everyone's tracking of all the unrest in the Middle East and everything, all the operations that are going on in CENTCOM. So we have to continue to provide that support to CENTCOM, and now it's directly to General Kurilla, viced through AFCENT.

The second priority is stand up the organization, obviously we were given the authority to stand up the new organization and everything that goes with it. So money, manpower, our banning document facilities, everything that goes along with an organization. So we had no increase in manpower on day one, so support the current operations and stand up a new organization is probably my second priority. Third would be international engagement. There's a lot of nations in our combatant command that are very eager to get involved with space. So we need to take this opportunity to engage with them before they seek out other nations to partner with, and we certainly want to be the partner of choice with the nation's in our AOR.

And I'd say the third and a half or the fourth priority is, in addition to all that, how do we look forward to integrate into the forward-looking O plans and other activities, OAls, that U.S. CENTCOM's planning. So whereas before the space portion of an O plan may have been a tab to an annex in an appendix sub parried somewhere in the back of a plan, now we need to have our own concerted what is the



SPACECENT support plans, the theater campaign plan? And then across all the O plans as we go forward as a combatant command and update those. So that'd be the four priorities we have first and foremost.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Terrific. That's a great way to shape the conversation here for the next few minutes. Chris, you previously served as a Director of Space Forces in the Pentagon, a job many of the people in this room in the audience are familiar with. How does your role then today as a component commander differ from the DS4 position?

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. So I was fortunate that I was around when we had the very first Director of Space Forces back in 2004, CENTAT at the time, not AFCENT. Since that time in 2004 till 2022, we've had 30 Director of Space Forces in the CENTCOM AOR, of note of those 30, three of them went on to become four-star generals. So I got to see the birth of the DS4 construct. I was the last Director of Space Forces in CENTCOM, so I'm glad we put that in the past. And I was also the Director of Space Forces out at PACAF for General Brown when he was the PACAF commander. So in all of that that I just described to you where every one of those individuals was working for the air component commander, integrating space as part of air space integration to support the combatant commander supporting that three-star or four-star, whatever the case may be.

Now as a component commander, I work directly for the combatant commander. So I'm a component commander to General Kurilla, just like all the other component commanders. I happen to have a lot less rank in CENTCOM, they're either a three or a two-star general. But I've got to seat at the table with all the rest of them, and we're providing best military advice and options to the combatant commander so he can respond to the command authorities back here in the States. So it's a little bit of a different angle that before we had a lot of buffer between us and the combatant commander and checks and balances, but now it's a very direct line between my very small organization, straight to the combatant commander providing him options.

So same thing on the service side. We've got, as a component, we've got a direct line right back to the CSO and the COO for any support that we may need. Obviously we work through the staff, but again, as a component we have that direct line back. So a lot of responsibility, but it's a lot of hard work and our guys are doing what needs to be done to meet those requirements.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Put a bit more of a personal and professional perspective. Describe for the audience a bit when you're at a meeting supporting General Kurilla as a colonel with multiple generals sitting around the table, and not just your AFCENT counterpart general, General Grynkewich, but you have a land counterpart, a maritime counterpart, I think a Marine and naval counter... a maritime counterpart. So if you describe that relationship, my guess is you're fully empowered if not needed in every conversation, whether you're a colonel or a three-star general.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yes sir. So in addition to that, we have the CJTF-OIR commander who's running operations there in Iraq in Syria. So it's more than just the services, you have the one more into that. So I will tell you at CENTCOM, we have been fully embraced as an equal partner. We may be a lot smaller, lot lighter on rank, but he looks to us all and he holds us all to the same standard despite the rank and despite the size



so CENTCOM's been great. I mean, Joe McKenzie who started the demand signal now moving forward to general Kurilla. So it's daunting but it's achievable.

And he looks to us for our equal best military advice, just like he does all the other component commanders. And I think something, I don't want to say clicked, but became very apparent that we've been fully accepted is over the past weekend we were preparing options and just doing some planning for the boss. And one of the other component commanders goes, "This doesn't look right. This really ought to be a SPACECENT controlled exercise. He's the supported commander and he ought to have control of these capabilities." So that put a smile on my face that we were at that level of acceptance just like every other component.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

That's a big deal, SPACECENT as the supported commander in a CENTCOM exercise. Did I get that right?

Col. Christopher Putman:

For a particular part, this particular action, we have the stick on that.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Do you have stories you might share with us about the sidebars? For example, does your soldier or sailor counterpart come to you and go, "How about me?" But again, neither your sailor or soldier counterparts can do anything without you.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah, I'd like to think that's true. They come to us, advice, they come to us for conversations. I think the greatest thing was our current DECOM, Joe Guillot, he was previously the air component commander. So when we first started the whole planning effort for the standup components, he was the air component. And he was hugely supportive in the fact that he came over to be the DECOM just lent itself to a great transition. So the air component definitely set the standard and provided us the support we needed to get up and running. And that's one of the basic tenets of standing up a space component, as I think we're all tracking, Space Force doesn't have lawyers or civil engineers or doctors or any of that support. We still have to wholly rely on the Air force and the air component and we have to operate as a team. And if we're not working together with the air component, none of this is going to work. And the support's just been outstanding today.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

That's terrific. Joint war fighting actualized is what I'm thinking. And then below your levels you've got airmen and Guardians, soldier, sailors, Marines, coast guardsmen, all in the fight together following your lead.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yes, sir. I will add that SPACECENT is just not Guardians. We have soldiers working in the component, I have UK working in the component, and I have Canada working in the component. So even though we're a brand new component, we are truly joint and combined from the get-go.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):



Terrific. Well, how does the standup of SPACECENT advance U.S partnerships in the region? You've alluded to that somewhat already, and what are some of the biggest challenges or opportunities really you have in that international arena, especially given classification levels?

Col. Christopher Putman:

I think there's a great thirst for knowledge across the command. We have a lot of nations that see space in the critical combat enabler that it is and can be. And they're coming to us for advice on how do I stand up with space force and what does that look like? I just returned from the AOR on Saturday and we just completed a Space 100 class in Saudi Arabia. So we graduated the first 100 space cadre in the Royal Saudi Air Force, so they're taking the first step to train their folks. But the challenge was how do I teach Space 100 at the unclassified level so that we can share it with their partners? Now we were able to do that but it was a significant lift on how to do that. So going forward, what are those opportunities to share with our partner nations at either the unclassified or the rail level going forward so that we can actually have fruitful conversations and work together.

And a lot of the answer may rely on the commercial side. So if we buy commercial off the shelf with our partners, we avoid a lot of those security classifications, roadblocks that have inhibited us in the past. And Saudi Arabia is just one example. Now that we've stood up as a component, we have a lot of requests from partner nations in the AOR to have those types of conversations. Do I need a space force? Can I integrate space with the Air Force? Can I integrate it into another part of my DOD equivalent? And we'll talk with each nation and we'll have those discussions to help them figure out what looks right for them. But ultimately, we've all worked together. This is a win for them, it's a win for us going forward.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Thanks, sir. Many of us know and are big fans, certainly your Space Forces Association tries to be a cheerleader for and be an advocate and reinforce public education on behalf of General Dickinson, Jim Dickinson, and of course Joan John Shaw. In that construct and across your AOR or when you're at McGill, could you talk to us a little bit about that relationship which I'm sure is revolving between SPACECOM and SPACECENT?

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. So we can't do our job without SPACECOM, I mean period, right? They're an equal combatant command like CENTCOM and all the other combatant commands. So I think I'll start with saying that the beginning or the focal point of our integration is U.S SPACECOM has a liaison team at U.S CENTCOM, they call it JIST, Joint Integrated Space Team. So it's a team about I think five to eight personnel. So we don't do anything unless we're talking together on space subjects. We meet regularly throughout the week. And in fact, whenever we have an office call anywhere in the CENTCOM headquarters, me and the JIST director as much as possible, we try to go together to have... The discussion we're having right now, we can have the discussion with the J3 or the JA to explain what the differences are between space SPACECENT and U.S SPACECOM and where that support comes.

So I will tell you on the ground in Tampa, we have a great re relationship and I think we're working through or working to success on that. As far as lines of responsibility, SPACECENT for lack of a better term, handles the down and in. So any capabilities and effects that directly support U.S CENTCOM, we've got the stick on that. We're the single space advisor to the combatant commander and provide him advice. If there's a fight going on in the space AOR, that's clearly a SPACECOM fight. And if that affects us, that's where we work with the JIST and back the SPACECOM to either request effects or determine how operations in their AOR are going to affect us in our combat operations or just day-to-



day operations in our AOR. So I think it's a valuable relationship and at least within CENTCOM I think it's working quite well going forward.

I will tell you back to your previous question, try to explain the difference between SPACECENT and SPACECOM to a partner nation, that becomes quite tricky. And frankly we're not doing ourselves too many favors by having those two different organizations because it's kind of a subtle nuance and a necessity for as large as our DOD is. But then you try to explain it to one of our partner nations, it becomes a little tricky. But we're working through that going forward. And I think that's one of the biggest roles SPACECENT can have, going back to the partner nation engagement and SPACECOM, is how do we funnel all those disparate efforts dealing with Saudi Arabia or Qatar whatever, into a single line so that you don't have 12 organizations coming at them from different directions. So I think we can help the fight in that particular way for sure.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Well, I would encourage you, we win wars with leadership, not with organizational charts. So what occurs to me and I see over and over and it's really almost a secret sauce for the new Space Force. You all know each other very well, you and John Shaw and General Burke, who's the S3, all grew up together, went to Weapons School. And a short phone call between the two of you, based on that trust and confidence of growing up together, can be powerful. And you're welcome to talk more about that, and just go ahead and brag about the terrific sisterhood and brotherhood you have across the Space Force. Start with General Saltzman.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. So obviously before I had this job, I was working at Headquarters Space Force and this was General Saltzman's effort to normalize that, "Hey, we're a service and what do we do as a service? We have components." I was fortunate enough that me and my team get the tag of figure out how to stand up components and go ahead and do those. And no good deed goes unpunished so my reward was, "Hey, go run one of those things you designed." So I'm kicking myself sometimes on some of the decisions I've made in the past. But it's all good, we're learning and we're going forward. So that support from the headquarters and General Saltzman's been hugely beneficial. And those tight, tight ties, right? It's a short phone call either back to General Burke or General Saltzman to get things done.

I would say the other key relationship here going back to SPACECOM is SPACECOM has a component too. So they're doing a bit of reorganization, but they're ultimately going to have a component out there for Space war fighting and that's my counterpart. And right now it's roughly General Schiess so if I need something, I pick up the phone, send the email, and it goes out to him and he's my counterpart at the component level on the SPACECOM side. And that that's been hugely beneficial to have those conversations and have those interactions back and forth of trying to just get to the root of a problem and solve that. And I look forward to, once they're done with the reorganization, whatever that looks like and whatever that new component commander is, is that component relationship between myself and General Schiess or whomever it may be at that organization and the other component commanders. The ability for me to pick up the phone when we have a component in UCOM or call out to General Mastalir at INDOPACOM of, "This is what I'm seeing, do you have any kit that can help support this or any personnel?"

And have those interactions just component to component and just get after it. It's been hugely beneficial and I look forward to us standing up the rest of the components.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):



Good. Well, we're not looking for a commitment or a promise, but Dr. Laplant this week got a lot of questions, this past week we got a lot of questions for Congress about how can we make acquisition of advanced really war fighting capabilities go faster? We happen to know, I think, that you work closely and again, you grew up with General Guetlein at Space Systems Command and you're also more and more connected to commercial space opportunities. So as you stand up really in joint war fighting command, you're defining requirements every day, are you interacting with industry, Space Systems Command and commercial space industry on a routine basis?

Col. Christopher Putman:

Not right now, but then it's definitely part of the plan. I've got 10 inbound personnel this summer. One of my top requirements was I need an acquisition professional to come and work at my staff. In fact, the J8 at CENTCOM, he came and found me as soon as I got there and said, "I need help with this." So it's definitely in the plans, we definitely are going to start working at it, but I just need a few more folks on board. But we'll have an acquisition professional on board with us this summer and we'll continue to build that shop within our 58 to get that expertise there to work with industry.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Well, great news for industry I would offer. So we talked a little bit about your partnership role counterpart Colonel to a three star with Lieutenant General Grynkewich who was here last month. And he mentioned and emphasized in fact that since Space Force and Central stood up, space is already getting more attention and there is a cleaner C2 line to the CENTCOM commander. You talked about that somewhat, but can you elaborate a bit more from your perspective?

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. So we have done with the existing people we have right now in a new organization, a new tasking process, we've stood up our own tasking process without getting too far from the ATO cycle because, again, we didn't get any extra people. We're wholly reliant on the AOC for IT and weapons systems, support, et cetera. So what does the space tasking order look like? Well, at the very basic is let's draw a cut line in the ATO, pull all the space stuff out and call it the space task order. That will evolve and it'll get more detailed and more complex. But now we have a separate document that goes out to the space units that belong the theater that precisely tasks them to do whatever's in support of the CENTCOM OAs. Same thing with the air operations directive. We'll have the space operations directive, we'll pull all the space material out of that so that if anybody's got any questions, they can go straight to that document.

And right now we're building a roadmap of what does the hierarchy of documents from strat to task look like for SPACECENT? So that folks can go find out where to go to. Are we going to have a spins? Yeah. It's going to be called the space spins. We'll have a space operations directive, lava, a theater space coordinating plan, we'll have a multitude of documents. We're still in the process of defining exactly what that is. But to the other components that previously just saw kind of a black hole with... and space was buried somewhere in the air component, now it'll be readily apparent exactly where we are and where they can provide that support.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Well, you're actually developing the training program every day for Guardians of the future. So as you know, a number of your counterparts went through the Air Force Weapons School together. Now that's transitioning more and more, although we're certainly still sending Guardians to the Weapons School.



Space Training and Readiness Command led by General Bratton now is embracing education and training, and public tactics, techniques and procedures development. Could you talk a little bit about what you're learning and how you see that going forward in training the next generation of Guardian? At a, by the way, Weapons School graduate level.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Right.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Like your own.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. So I think what we're learning is from a Guardian perspective, we probably have some room to learn and make up on the operational level planning. So whereas before you could send Guardians to the AOC and they could focus on their weapons system and just doing their little piece of the pie, now that we're a separate component and we owe best military advice straight to the combatant commander, we've got to fill in that gap. Whereas before AFCENT may have filled in that gap from an operational level perspective. So I think we've got the tactics down pretty good at the very basic tactical level, but there's a gap in there that us as a service need to fill in. And how do we train that and what's the schoolhouse, for lack of a better term, to come up with operational level planning. That's why I love having Army FGOs on my staff.

They know how to do operational level planning. It's military planning's beat into them from the get-go and I absolutely love it. So we could learn a lot from not just the Air Force but the other services as well, just to get that breadth of planning experience out there. I'd say that the other thing we're probably learning is how important it is that we need to have representatives in all the other components. And how do I get them smart enough that I could go take a Guardian and say, "Hey, you're going to go live in Bahrain for three years and work with the Naval component." I'd love to do that once I get more people. Or you're going to go live with ARCENT for a couple of years and live with those folks. So we'll have to figure out what's that training pipeline look like to get folks Army smart or Navy smart. And I think in the long term, that's going to be great for the Space Force to have a guy that just spent three years with AFCENT or ARCENT to come back and bring that expertise into the space staff or SPACECOM.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Great. It's visionary, what you're talking about really is. It helps us all look over the horizon. Can we talk a little bit more and certainly at the relative layman level about your resources? You have your, I know, concern, educated guess about precision navigation and timing. In many ways, the GPS constellation is a nexus for an employment of precision-guided weapons, and that's an ongoing planning if not employment operation every day. Beyond PMT, we know you connect with ISR and targeting. So could you give us an unclassified overview of that in your day-to-day operational role, and probably goes right to AI Udeid and the AOC4?

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. I think I'll lump GPS and satcom together. So especially in our AOR, I mean it's a good bit of distance between AI Udeid in Afghanistan or AI Udeid in Northern Syria. Without GPS, without satcom, none of that is possible. And in the electromagnetic spectrum, both of those are fragile signals. So whether it's intentional or inadvertent, it's very easy to lose those capabilities. So what can we do to



protect those capabilities that are out there? So it's working with our partners and all the other components. What are your requirements and how do we fill those and do I have enough capacity on orbit?

And then it's also an education thing of most widgets are made to be able to function with and without GPS, just we've forgotten how to use it without GPS. So maybe there's an education piece out there as well. As far as the ISR front, there's obviously a lot of capacity and capability out there, but that's through the J2 channels. So we work with our S2 and all the other L knows that are there at CENTCOM to ensure that the combatant commander gets what he needs, because we've got all the various agencies out there that have a piece of that. So it's just for ISR, it's just not SPACECENT.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Or you pick up the phone and you share a perspective with your good friend, Greg Daniel, the DS2, too and I know each other. And again, there's a lot of power in that trust and confidence you have with the S2 in the Pentagon and around a higher level classification we'll get to hear.

Col. Christopher Putman:

And that's where the phone call back to the SPACECOM and General Schiess and his team out the CSpOC of that's really our hub back into the SPACECOM enterprise. And they have a lot of those built in relationships there that we can leverage through his team. Our last three intel professionals that we've had down at Al Udeid have all come from the CSpOC, and what a wealth of know knowledge and connections they bring when they come forward and then when they go back they bring that theater perspective. So it's a pretty good symbiotic relationship to keep that rolling. So yeah, CSpOC is a huge enabler for us to reach into all those entities. Yeah.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Well, could you talk about then a bit just specifically as much as possible how industry can help you? The broadly described certainly acquisition system is there, it's pretty cool that Lieutenant General Donna shipped them with all her space background and is the Deputy EQ. You've got Mr. Calve there now and obviously the EQ himself. But straight to industry, are there ideas on how industry can better support your fight?

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. I think your great place for industry is we do the partner nation engagement are, what are those off-the-shelf capabilities that are purchasable and readily available for our partners across the AOR that they can purchase and fly and become a "space pairing nation"? But provide capabilities not only to their country but also something we can share and work with them on. So it's great that we did Space 100 out the theater, but until we actually have something to work on, it's kind of... It's PowerPoint deep, right? So if there's capabilities out there that whether it's commercially available space situational awareness, then we can at least have a discussion and look at what's going on orbit. Or it's a commercially available space capability that they can buy, either buy the whole capability or buy a service from them. That would go a long way towards building partnership capacity of just something tangible that we could work with them on to further their desires to move forward in the space realm.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Before we shift though, we'll get ready to shift to audience questions. But before we do that, you have a unique warrior statesman perspective for a very challenging dynamic, dangerous AOR. The threats are



real. Certainly Iran, the relationships, and as Iran continues to challenge peace and stability in the region. Your perspective on how to keep the peace in that part of the world as a warrior statesman, as a space smart, very space smart senior leader, would be interesting I think. And you don't need to go above your pay grade, but your perspective is really helpful I think.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. I think just having the conversations, I mean the fact that we spent two weeks in Saudi Arabia having those peer to peer discussions on things space can do, and that obviously leads to be better partnerships. In fact, we intentionally brought a couple very junior CGOs with us to Saudi Arabian in addition to the folks teaching the classes just to have those conversations at the junior levels of, "Look. I've got lieutenants deployed down range doing space operations and this could be you too." So our goal is to have those conversations as much as possible, both at the junior level and then I'll handle the conversations at the senior leader, key leader engagement level. And I'll continue to have those move forward as much as they'll have us and much as opportunity presents itself. And we talked about the priorities at the beginning, as much free time as I have to actually get around and it get to all those places. So obviously, it's not a quick trip to get to any place over there, but we'll do the best we can getting around to all of our nations.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Well, thanks very much. Advice, I think you have a question. Go ahead, Chris Gordon and we need to get the microphone. Thanks, Patrick.

Chris Gordon:

Hi. Thank you, sir. Chris Gordon here for Air & Space Forces Magazine. One thing that differentiates CENTCOM is U.S troops are engaged in active combat. So you have a lot of experience in other AORs in that Pentagon, how does that change your day-to-day? Because you may have to respond to a contingency and you don't have the luxury of time to figure something out. You need to just provide something right away to the commander. So just how does that change your day to day given that you've had experience in other places?

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. So the one thing we have that I didn't have when I was the Director of Space Force is out at PACAF is the folks that man our portion of the AOC floor. So we're still in the AOC IUD, the portion of the floor where they sat is still where they sit now. And we call it the Space Operations Center even though it's only a corner of the ops floor. But those folks are 24/7 and they're rotational. So they're focused on the fight here and now 24/7. So I've got folks that man the ops floor and I've also got folks that are deployed in the back shop doing plans.

So whereas I was out of PACAF, everybody was PCS out there and we had a normal battle to them. I've got folks dedicated 24/7 for the current fight. I think it's kind of built in to handle that. But for the current operations, if I didn't have that built in 24/7 note, I think I'd probably have to give you a better answer but I think we're well set to respond to that. So my deputy's down range as well, so if I get a phone call and I'm in the airport and I clearly can't answer the question, I'm like, "Hey. Call the deputy, he's down range, he's 24/7" and get ahold of him.

Chris Gordon:



If I could just follow up on that. How does that affect your relationship with the commander with General Kurilla? Because obviously you may need to talk to him on a moment's notice about the contingency you need to respond to.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Sure. And we do get those questions at a moment's notice. He's in Tampa, I'm in Tampa so I mean we have regular meetings and he engages with the commanders all the time just on regular battle rhythm. But certainly, if there's calls or questions, email's 24/7, the phone's 24/7 and we'll pick up the phone, we'll answer the question whenever the need arises. Like I said, if I'm in a place that I can't talk classify, that's why I've got a deputy down range to handle that. But it's definitely a challenge with how few people we actually have in the SPACECENT organization because after me, you got my deputy and then it starts getting real thin and it drops off precipitously. Whereas the other components may have a fair number of FTOs, we just don't have that luxury. But I've got three FTOs and that's it.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

George.

George Nicholson:

Sir. Good morning, George Nicholson with Global SOF Foundation. I got a question. General Wright was at a meeting with me last week, McAleese Symposium, and I guess General Saltzman was asked the question. And General Raymond has talked about some of the huge initiatives that your overhead command is talking about, integrating commercial satellite capabilities, imagery and everything else. But I think the question that was brought up from the audience and he really didn't address, it may be awkward for you to address it, of saying if you're using increasingly space-based capability for command and control communications for military operations or ISR operations, is there going to be a question on the legality or impacts of using those capabilities?

Col. Christopher Putman:

I am definitely not a lawyer, so I can't speak to the legality of that. But I'll tell you commercial is a part of future warfare, especially space as we go forward. I think we just as we lease buy or acquire commercial services, I think we just need to work with our legal teams to figure out what right looks like on that one.

George Nicholson:

And the last quick thing, I think that General Berger had mentioned break last week about one of the most difficult things the Marines is getting old ideas out and getting new. I go back to a quote from World War II where it was one of the field marshals that said, "The more difficult things of getting new ideas into the military is getting old ideas out of the military." You've talked about the education process. How difficult is it to go ahead and clearly articulate what you can do with current and emerging capabilities as opposed to what we did in the past? I was on the Iranian Hostage Rescue mission and I look at some of the huge problems we had on that. I look what happened to us the Song T Operation, getting an empty camp, what you could do today.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. I think that's the value of having component commanders being able to put their signature on a paper and clearly articulate requirements and present that to the leadership. So we just, Colonel Lance, who's my counterpart in UCOM when they stand up the component, we wrote a memo of as far as



training, this is the amount of support we need from the reach back organization. So we're now able with the authority of a component commander on behalf of the combatant command, put that in writing and to the proper authorities. So again, we could do that before, but we're buried in the air component and there was a certain level of buffer there that weren't... didn't have the weight behind it. But to your point about burying old ideas, I mentioned that I was there at the beginning of the DS4 construct, I was the last DS4 in CENTCOM.

It's amazing when I showed up last year how little has changed in 20 years of us conducting operations in the Middle East. In fact, I would almost posit that we've regressed in some areas because the stress that OIF put on us made us focus. There is so much opportunity for us to do things in new and exciting ways, and I know that's what General Saltzman wants us to do. As far as the kit we have and the people we have, we need to give them the freedom to execute. And obviously we've got there's old documents and instructions and policies that have been around since the nineties that we need to fix. But now that we have a service, and that's the great thing about having a service focused on space, is that we've got a champion to get after these outdated policies and fix them going forward. And you now have the inputs of components across all the combatant commands and SPACECOM for providing that input. So good things to come and we'll rudder deflect to get to right.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Great. Online, go ahead.

Tobias Naegele:

Yes. We have an online question from Sarah Babcock. You discussed the unique relationships with SPACECOM, CENTCOM, and where SPACECENT sits. Sometimes though it's hard for people to understand how space is integrating into the joint force since we don't have, for example, a sea focused co-com or a land co-com. Is there something comparable in another domain or co-com that you can help us with? You might look at cyber first.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. I think Cybercom or maybe Transcom might be the analogy there that is a different command. But again it's what's the threat and who are they focused on? So CENTCOM is focused on Iran and it's all things Iran. It's not all things Iran except space, right? CENTCOM owns the entire problem within the Department of Defense and the commander needs advice on all things. So that's why we're there and to support him. Clearly U.S SPACECOM's got a mission and it's a 100K and above and that they need to fight that mission. So I think that's the difference there. The CENTCOM analogy is a little more complicated because you don't have a service that belongs to that, so that's where that doesn't quite hold together. But I'm not sure I answered the question because it's pretty tricky, but I don't know if there's a follow-up on anybody on that one.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

You might talk a bit more about... I'm sorry, Doug, go ahead. Let me ask this though while Doug's getting the mic, making sure that you have a resilient space capability is obviously depending against attacks from across the electromagnetic spectrum, while they're defined, or cyber attacks. Certainly there's a Cybercom collaborative requirement there to ensure that your PNT networks are reliable. Can you get into that in an unclassified level a little bit about defending your networks?

Col. Christopher Putman:



Probably not. That's probably the easiest answer right there, and I'd really have to phone a friend to get the expertise on that one. But that's where SPACECOM and the Space Force come in is like we're the downstream users of a lot of these capabilities and we're planning on it being there. And that's in the SPACECOM and the Space Force side to protect those capabilities to ensure that the effect gets downrange. So yeah, we've got enough to focus on and I'm trusting them to block in their lane and support us there.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

That's actually a great answer. You're [inaudible 00:43:23] the operational tactical level, joint warfight op level certainly and focused on operation's alliance, partnerships, and really TTPs at the tactical level. So please, Doug.

Doug Raaberg:

Probably the elephant. Doug Raaberg, Executive Vice President, AFA. Obviously the elephant in the room is we've had a lot of kinetic activity just this past week alone with Iranian militias. Rather than answering the specifics of how you respond, what I'm really interested in is the future. And have these changed your perspective on, let's say, your request for forces for capability, and the ability to not only detect but also take space-based capabilities to the next level, almost that creative perspective.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. I don't think the recent activity has changed our perspective. I would say that we continue to ask for more than what's available, so we've already passed that threshold and Space Force is still, what? Maybe like 14,000 strong total. If you include officers enlisted and civilians, and then you add the kit that goes with that, that there's just not enough to go around. And we're working on that and we're continuing to get bigger. So I don't think the recent events have changed what we're focused on. We know what we'd like to have and it starts with people. That's part of General Kurilla's strategic approach, people, partners, and innovation. I mean, it all starts with having the best trained, innovative people look looking for creative solutions. So using that strategic approach, what we have on the ground right now, we're finding new and creative ways to support the combatant commander, whether that's CENTCOM or we provide support back to SPACECOM as well. And we provide support to UCOM and other combatant commands.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

That's helpful. Tobias?

Tobias Naegele:

So you said people, partners and innovation, and I'm going to ask you a three-parter.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Sure.

Tobias Naegele:

We have a question from the audience asking us about authorities that you need. I'm curious to hear about whether you get access to the talent and kind of experience that you really need when you're building your staff. And then in terms of partners, you are reaching out throughout the region, you've



traveled a lot in the region. Are your partners contributing to the space mission, and are they excited about having a closer relationship perhaps and better access to the kinds of capabilities that you can provide?

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. I'll start with the second part first because I think I already forgot the first question. I'll have to come back to you on that one. But I think the partners want to contribute and they are excited about it, and frankly having a component out there helps encourage them to start asking the questions and now they have a focal point. But we're working on what best way that they can help contribute. And like we started out, we're only three months old, four months old, so we're still trying to figure out what right looks like. So part of my trip here to the NCR is to meet with the folks in S5 and SAF IA and the other agencies there to level the bubble to figure out what right looks like going forward. Because they want to contribute, they want to be partners, I just don't have a good answer right today on what that looks like.

And I think the first question was are we getting the people and experience that we need? Yeah. So I mentioned I've only got three permanent party folks on staff right now, one of them me. So sure, we have the right experience that we have right now but going forward, I think we are definitely getting the support of the Space Force. We're going to expand to 10 permanent party this summer. From what I'm tracking, we're going to get fills on all 10 billets and just looking at the personnel we've got inbound, it's the right mix. I mean, we're still going to be single string on a lot of folks out there, but the first tranche this summer, we're definitely getting what we need. It's still not enough and we'll work and we'll increment each year and slowly build. The entire service is still standing up, I mentioned we're only 14,000 strong. We're standing up a whole bunch of new organizations. And as much as I like to think I'm the most important organization, the Space Force, that's probably not the case. Now we've got to share the wealth and spread across the service.

Tobias Naegele:

And then the last part was authorities. Do you have the authorities that you need? And if you could imagine authorities that you'd like to have that you don't have, what would they be?

Col. Christopher Putman:

I think we have the authorities we need to get the job done and I think we can defer the rest of that question for discussion at another time.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Other questions? Let me fill in while we've got a few more minutes. I've always thought there was a terrific opportunity in the context of Secretary King's one team, one fight. And especially I think applicable to your theater and your experience again from a school graduate. Are you thinking about, or have you had the opportunity to, get to the tactical level with deployed fighter or bomber crews and talk about how they look at their 24 by seven reliability for certainly PT and targeting capabilities? Or use of leveraging commercial space assets for imagery, those kinds of things. Or have you just jumped in the back of a Strike Eagle and gone for a ride?

Col. Christopher Putman:

So I've not jumped in the back of a Strike Eagle, but I did get my first arrested landing on a carrier about a month and a half ago and a catapult shot. So thank you NAVCENT for that great opportunity. Yeah, it



was great. But as far as engaging with the folks down range, without getting in the specifics, whenever we have a report in our morning sit rep, I always ask my team, "Hey, did you pick up the phone and call this AEW and ask him what this really meant and what they were doing? And how you can help them solve that problem?" I mean, is it just a switch ology thing or is there really something going on?

And I think there's still an opportunity to do that education and help folks get the right, whether it's an AEW or whether it's Army unit, Navy unit, because again it's... All's I know is my box doesn't work and I'm going to write it up as a problem. Well, let's get to the root cause and figure out exactly why this is working. So we are definitely doing that and we're definitely having those conversations.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

That's huge. That's a big deal. You make it sound like just a day-to-day way of doing business, but to have that kind of leadership and help persistent encouragement and collaboration to doing that team, that really is one team, one fight exemplified.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Well, and it's great. There's a lot of leadership down range that's had a lot of exposure to the space missionary. And just as they're matriculating into senior positions across the AEWs, they understand the missionary so it's not foreign to them. So they're definitely a receptive audience. I believe the next version of this is "Mule" Koslov that you're going to talk to. We work together out at PACAF, we work together out at Al Udeid, and he definitely understands that. So as we get those types of leaders that have come up through the chain, it makes it a lot easier to have those conversations and hugely probably the Weapons Schools where a lot of that's cross pollenization's come out.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Well, that's terrific. We're about to wind up. We have time for one more question. Two more. We'll give you one more, Chris

Tony McCartney:

Sir, I'm Tony McCartney, SBIR advisors. Our focus is defense innovation and we've seen some rapid adoption of capability through some of the existing task forces like Task Force 99 for AFCENT for example. Any foresight on partnership with those component task forces or possibly standing up an equivalent for SPACECENT?

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah, absolutely. So it's Taskforce 59 with NAVCENT and 39 with ARCENT, and now 99 with AFCENT. The original construct paper napkin design for Task Force 99 had a Guardian in it. Back to the original priorities, I've got to stand up a new organization. I would absolutely love to have a Guardian in Task Force 99, but I just don't have the capacity to do that. Maybe somewhere down the road as I build out to whatever my FOC structure is, I'll have enough folks to give a body to Task Force 99, 39 and 59. We've made a couple trips up to NAVCENT to talk to the Task Force 59 guys, and there's a lot of work there to be done. Maybe if I can get an LNO up at Bahrain, they can work with 59 and some other folks. But right now our entire organization is an X9 task force because that's all we're doing is innovating and creating a new organization. So I don't know what we'd be called, something-nine. Or just nine.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):



Chris, one more and then we'll wrap up.

Chris Gordon:

Oh, I was going to ask about the innovation aspect in the task forces, but you've addressed some of that. But what ways are you innovating? You may not have the Guardians to stand up a specific task force, but are you empowered to experiment in any way and try out things that maybe other aspects of the Space Force cannot do?

Col. Christopher Putman:

Yeah. I certainly think we are empowered, just it's how much bandwidth do we have? And again, with both 99, 59 and a less familiar with 39, they carved out people to do nothing but do innovation. It's operationally focused and operationally executed. Unless it's in the course of the day-to-day operations, I just don't have the bandwidth to carve out something specifically different. But I will tell you the fact that we have space capabilities resident in theater that belong to CENTCOM, gives us quite a bit of flexibility to create innovative TTPs that are pretty innovative, for lack of a better term. And yeah, I'm proud of the work the guys are doing down range and like I said, it's Guardians. It's primarily Guardians and Soldiers but like I said, I got UK and Canadians contributing as well.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Great. Well then again, thank you to all those here today in the Doolittle building. A sincere thanks for many of you who joined online. We, your Air & Space Forces Association, remain absolutely committed to supporting our Airmen and Guardians and their families. It's been a treat, Chris, to have you here with us and to hear about your team, your small but mighty SPACECENT team. And please join us, we're back here on the 19th of April for our next Air & Space Warfighters in Action event with Colonel Joshua Koslov, Commander of the 350th Spectrum Warfare Wing. And registration for that event is open and can be found on afa.org.

I have to say, I know General Grynkewich will watch this. It's been a gift for AFA and some old fighter pilots who love space to have both of you on the stage, two partners in a tough fight. And truly for the two of you and your teams, as Secretary Kendall rightly talks about, one team and one fight in a tough, demanding, dangerous AOR. Colonel Chris Putman and General Alex Grynkewich, and your teams are keeping our nation safe and we can never, never thank you enough. Oh, by the way, now that we know AFCENT gave you a jet ride, I'm pretty sure there's a strike you are offering out here.

Col. Christopher Putman:

Hopefully it's not with General Grynkewich because he'll make me pay for it. Yeah.

Lt. Gen. Bruce "Orville" Wright, USAF (Ret.):

Thanks. Please go ahead, a round of applause.