

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to express our ongoing concerns about the preliminary decision to move United States Space Command (USSPACECOM) from Colorado Springs, Colorado, to Huntsville, Alabama. We remain deeply troubled that the decision to relocate USSPACECOM undermined the two most important factors for any critical basing decision: protecting national security and minimizing cost. At a time when threats in space are rapidly increasing, particularly from Russia and China, USSPACECOM cannot afford any operational interruptions and must achieve Full Operational Capability (FOC) as quickly as possible.

As you are well aware, space has become an increasingly critical and contested domain that is central to our economy, communications, and national security. President Putin's lawless, reprehensible aggression against Ukraine in violation of international rules and norms, underscores the urgency for America to maintain superiority in the space domain.

These rising threats came into stark view in November 2021, when Russia tested an anti-satellite weapons system that destroyed one of its own satellites, and in the process created thousands of pieces of space debris that risked the lives of American astronauts aboard the International Space Station. At the time, U.S. Army General James Dickinson, Commander of U.S. Space Command, said, "Russia has demonstrated a deliberate disregard for the security, safety, stability, and long-term sustainability of the space domain for all nations."¹ In his most recent testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, General Dickinson further highlighted the threats we face from Russia and China in space, and their increased cooperation designed to outpace our advantage.²

The Intelligence Community also warned in its annual threat assessment that "Russia continues to train its military space elements and field new anti-satellite weapons to disrupt and degrade U.S. and allied space capabilities."³ We support the export controls and sanctions that you have enacted to degrade Russia's defense programs, particularly in light of Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine. Our adversaries, however, will waste no time enhancing their space control

¹ <https://www.spacecom.mil/Newsroom/News/Article-Display/Article/2842957/russian-direct-ascent-anti-satellite-missile-test-creates-significant-long-last/>

² <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/USSPACECOM%20FY23%20Posture%20Statement%20SASC%20FINAL.pdf>

³ <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2022-Unclassified-Report.pdf>

operations, and neither can we waste time in developing our space defense strategies and capabilities.

U.S. Space Command plays a pivotal role in defending satellite systems that provide GPS navigation, national security communications, internet and cellular services, and missile warning and defense. This work is critical to the support USSPACECOM provides to U.S. European Command's efforts to monitor and respond to the situation in Ukraine, as well as supporting U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's work to deter aggression from an increasingly dangerous China. We applaud General Dickinson and the men and women who serve in USSPACECOM for achieving Initial Operational Capability at Peterson Space Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colorado, last August. As Russia's war on Ukraine evolves, it is vital for USSPACECOM to maintain operational continuity, and achieve FOC without delay. We remain concerned that moving the combatant command headquarters will slow the progress toward full capability – a delay we cannot afford at this fraught geopolitical moment in history.

Important investments have been made in Colorado to strengthen the United States' national security space missions. In addition to the other space assets across our state, Colorado Springs is home to the National Space Defense Center (NSDC), which is particularly vital to our nation's ability to respond to threats in space. Located at Schriever Space Force Base, the NSDC provides unity of effort between the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community to facilitate information sharing across the entire national security space enterprise. The NSDC maintains vigilant watch on activities in space, warns against emerging threats, orchestrates our counter-space operations, and underpins USSPACECOM's warfighting mission. Colorado is also home to the National Reconnaissance Office's (NRO) Aerospace Data Facility-Colorado (ADF-C) at Buckley Space Force Base in Aurora, Colorado. The ADF-C is responsible for collecting and disseminating intelligence across U.S. agencies and U.S. allies. Over the past several decades, Colorado has also developed national security communications systems that would be extraordinarily expensive to quickly replicate elsewhere. These unparalleled missions, and existing infrastructure, make Colorado the nexus of national security space operations for the Intelligence Community and the Department of Defense. We are concerned that it would be detrimental to remove USSPACECOM from this network of assets.

The Chairmen of the Senate and House Intelligence Committees, both of whom recently visited Colorado to meet with USSPACECOM, NSDC, and NRO leadership, agree that the basing decision must account for and protect our intelligence missions and dependencies.

We must respond to rapidly advancing threats in space by building on the investments that have already been made in Colorado and to our mission in space – not squandering time, money, personnel, and additional resources by moving USSPACECOM. It is our understanding that the Government Accountability Office and the Department of Defense Inspector General will soon

release reports examining the USSPACECOM basing decision. We urge your administration to carefully review both reports and ensure that the final basing decision takes the findings, and national security and cost implications, into account.

We appreciate your attention to this matter, and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Doug Lamborn
United States Representative



Jason Crow
United States Representative



Diana DeGette
United States Representative



Ed Perlmutter
United States Representative



Joe Neguse
United States Representative



Ken Buck
United States Representative



Lauren Boebert
United States Representative

Cc:

Honorable Kamala Harris
Vice President of the United States

Honorable Lloyd Austin
Secretary of Defense

Honorable Avril Haines
Director of National Intelligence

Honorable Frank Kendall
Secretary of the Air Force

Jake Sullivan
National Security Advisor to President Biden