

Center for Strategic and International Studies

TRANSCRIPT

Event

Delivering Space Capabilities for Warfighting Advantage  
**Introduction & Welcome Remarks**

DATE

**Thursday, November 20, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. ET**

FEATURING

**Kay Sears**

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CSIS EXPERTS

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John J. Hamre:

OK, folks. Everybody, we want to get started. This is – we've got some – we got some people out at the coffee bar, but, anyway, they'll be in here in a second. Thank you all for joining us today. This is called a summit meeting, and for good reasons. And I'll get into that in just a second.

We were sitting back – I won't – for the sake of their privacy I won't say who was with us. But we were back in the green room. And we were toasting with our coffee mugs the death of JCIDS, you know? (Laughter.) And, you know, I think it's – and I mentioned that because we're in this really remarkable moment. I mean, we've had so many episodes of reform, you know, over the years. This feels different. And I feel like we've got something really moving. We needed to, you know, shake things. We got a lot more to do, but I do feel there's just kind of an energy now that's fresh and very new.

Now, I think it concentrates around the Space Force because, you know, when we created the Space Force, it's a very small force. You know, it isn't like the army that has a big tail. It's not like the Navy with a great big infrastructure. You know, it's a very small force. And it cannot do its job without a deep and active partnership with the private sector. That's just central. And so when we have this summit, this is a summit meeting of everybody that's involved in making – this challenging new day, we rise to the demand. And I think space becomes – as everybody knows here, it becomes a larger, far more important dimension to our preparations. To deterrence, you know, because that's what we're really trying to do.

So, anyway, thank you all for being here. You're all going to be a party to the success of this conference. Let me just say thank you to General Saltzman for joining us today. I was very gratified that he persisted, and he got permission to come, you know, to a think tank. I mean, that's a big deal. And I'm really glad for that. (Laughs.) But, you know, look, the department needs to be able to tell its own story. I mean, rather than have a bunch of outsiders tell the story for it, right? You know, so we – I'm really glad, General, that that you're here. And it's really wonderful.

Special thanks to Tim Walton and the Hudson Institute. We're partnering today on this conference. And I'm really grateful for that opportunity. I want to say a special thanks to Kay Sears, you know, for helping to make it possible. You're one of the partners, you know, that's in the private sector. And I'd also say a thanks to Mike Dickey and Elara Nova, who are sponsoring the lunch today. And I just – you know, but the Space Force cannot do its job without private sector partners. That's the foundation. And that's why it's important for all of us to be in the room together talking with each other.

Let me ask Kay to join me here on the stage. She has a long, very impressive background. I won't – she's much – she must have started when she was a grade school or something or other in the space business, because she

doesn't look nearly old enough to have had 35 years in the aerospace business. But it's not just that she's been in the private sector. Since 2008, she's been on the NSTAC, one of the most important advisory boards that we have. And it just shows her commitment. You know, which is what I feel is truly the case in most corporate America that works in the Defense Department. They really are committed to America's security. And Kay has demonstrated that every step of the way with her very successful career.

Would you please come up, and we'll get this going for real? Thanks, Kay.

Kay Sears:

Thank you so much. Thank you so much for that introduction and for setting the stage. It's really a – it's really a privilege to welcome you, on behalf of the Boeing Company, to this important dialogue. It's really a pivotal moment. And I say that for kind of two reasons. One is, we have learned a lot in some of the recent conflicts about how indispensable the space sector is, the space domain. I know we used to say space is a warfighting domain, but it's actually more than that. It is absolutely critical to be integrated in and to deliver some of the effects that the other domains need to deliver. So we're learning a lot about that. I think former Vice Chairman Grady went so far as to say that it is the most essential warfighting domain right now.

We also have a new kind of North Star with Secretary Hegseth and his commander's intent to rebuild the industrial base, the defense-industrial base, into a new arsenal of freedom, right? That term has come back with the same sense of urgency that it had before. And I really think that's a call to everyone in this room, whether you're part of the Department of War, the Space Force, or industry, or some of our CSIS, and the think tanks that can really connect those dots and pull that strategy together. And it's not just about what we build. We often talk about what we build and how relevant that has to be to the threat or to the fight. I think today's conversation is going to be more about the how. How are we doing it? From the requirements definition phase all the way through, how we deliver faster on the production lines and get capability out to the warfighter.

So we have that shared imperative, which I think is really important. And one thing I really want to stress is – and I know that General Saltzman can handle this – we have to be realistic about the timelines that we're talking about, the timelines to acquire, the timelines to make some of the changes that we're going to hopefully talk about in the room, the timeline for industry to respond, the timeline of our supply chain, and some of the real constraints that we face as a nation to get capability out to the warfighter. So I just ask that when we're talking today, let's really be realistic. Let's look back and look at the lessons that we've learned, because we have decades of lessons both on the industry side and on the government side.

And industry has a really clear role to play. You know, we've defined that within Boeing as we look at the sense of urgency in a couple of concepts. One of the concepts is active program management. What does that mean? It means getting out in front with our government customer as they're defining requirements, as they're contracting, and really talking about what drives cost and schedule. Being very active in the dialogue. Not waiting until we get to PDR or CDR, but really working at the requirements stage to say, if you put that cyber requirement in, you're adding two years to the schedule. And here's why. So that active program management is a concept. And it's really designed to achieve a mission outcome, which is, again, I think part of General Saltzman's mantra right now, is we have got to focus on the outcomes. And making the warfighter the customer again, not the contract. We focus so much on the contract. So how do we focus on getting that capability out to the warfighter?

Industry always looks for a demand signal. When we get a demand signal, we can invest. When PE firms see a demand signal, they can invest. I think the secretary, and I think the CSO, they are giving us a demand signal through the architecture, through some of their tenets. And now we're seeing on the weapons side through, you know, long-term, multiyear contracting. Those are good demand signals. We can use those. We can go raise money. We can go invest in R&D for the capabilities that we need. The integrated mission deltas is also an example that shows what's possible when you combine acquisition, sustainment, and operations, and everybody's pulling in the same direction. So, you know, General Saltzman has been transforming the Space Force into the warfighting service. And speed is the corner tenet that he's been emphasizing. Just on the 14th of November the vector list came out. So we know what he wants to achieve. So I would encourage us, you know, today, let's go make that happen.

And with that, it's my pleasure to introduce our keynote and the fireside chat. We're fortunate enough to have two individuals. They really don't need any introduction, but I'll start with Steve Kitay, who's senior vice president of space defense at True Anomaly. And he's the former deputy assistant secretary of defense for space policy. Steve's been driving force in integrating space into the joint warfighting and also emerging technologies, and how those can really accelerate delivery of capability. And then, of course, joining him is General Chance Saltzman, our chief of space operations of the U.S. Space Force. He has also been at the forefront of defining how to organize, train, and equip. But he's gone so much farther with his vision to reshape the conversation around readiness, around resiliency, around modernization.

So with that, let's invite those two gentlemen up front and let's get the dialogue going. Thank you. (Applause.)

(END.)