INSA Leadership Dinner 2025
Dr. Chris Scolese, NRO Director
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PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

- Thanks, Yvette and good evening, everyone. I appreciate the chance to share a few thoughts with you about the NRO - our terrific people and our unique mission.

- In describing who we are and what we do, I like to say that the NRO senses what others can't. We collect what is often imperceptible, sharing it with our nation's policymakers, defense and intelligence leaders, as well as allies and other partners.

- We deliver information they can trust in order to make informed decisions or understand the character of local and regional activity; to discern the intent of adversaries or favorably influence an outcome.

- And we do our work by bringing together brilliant scientists and engineers, who innovate remarkable space-based ISR technology systems and tools that can do necessary, and often special, things. All with an eye on preserving life, ensuring freedom, enhancing stability, and protecting our planet.

- A few years ago, I came to this forum to discuss the NRO's ambitious plans for the future. As is often the case, time has sped by and we find ourselves standing on future's doorstep. And so, my appearance here this evening gives me the opportunity to share how we've met - and exceeded - our objectives as I laid them out for you not so long ago.

- I'm pleased to say that, over the last two years alone, we have launched over 150 satellites, creating the largest and most capable government constellation on orbit in our nation's history - with additional launches coming this month.

- As you saw in the video created by the talented NRO Public Affairs Team, we launched from multiple sites on 3 continents, using all of the qualified rockets in the inventory. Further, we utilized a global web of ground stations and capabilities provided by our commercial and international partners.

- We've also made important investments in our ground capabilities, and strengthened our partnerships with industry and across the whole of government - both domestically and internationally.

- These changes are strengthening our nation's space-based intelligence capabilities in a number of ways. Today, our satellite architecture is shortening revisit times and increasing observational persistence. We're making it much harder for adversaries to hide, while achieving improved resiliency and security.

- Through an increasing number of commercial partnerships, we're delivering enhanced capabilities in areas from electro optical to radar and other phenomenologies.

    - We're also achieving the rapid fusion of commercial data streams into national data streams, making them more readily available and useful to our customers - the policymaker, warfighter, and first responder.

- The NRO's investments in advanced computing - including Big Data, as well as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning techniques - offer improved data capture; while investments in ground systems are enhancing data processing *and* allowing us to develop sophisticated dashboards and tools that make our data more accessible to users.

- To secure our leadership into the future, we've accelerated the pace of research, development, and innovation - by leveraging the NRO's new Space Reconnaissance Lab, and by creating dynamic engagements with an expanding set of partners across government, academia, industry, and allied nations that is broader than ever.

- As we move forward:
    - We'll have the capability to track more objects in real-time and with greater accuracy by fusing a variety of data in ways that help users to better understand our world;
    - We'll be able to deliver that data faster to users - especially analysts, battlefield commanders, and first responders;
    - And we'll leverage that data to play a critical part in the creation and operation of Golden Dome and other national priorities.

- Today, we're making progress in each of these areas - and as we do, we also know there is more work to be done to address new challenges and capture evolving opportunities as they reveal themselves. That work will include:
    - Orchestrating ever-closer collaboration among partners that allows us to combine data sets in real-time; producing and delivering products with greater accuracy and utility to the end user;
    - Reengineering validation processes and other internal controls to accelerate the acceptance of machine-generated products created from our collections;

- Encouraging innovation by creating permissions for users to develop applications based on our validated data sets;
- And collaborating with our partners to address policy considerations - where necessary - that make this possible.

- Nearly 50 years ago INSA foretold what it would take to deal with these challenges. At your founding, you defined better government-industry collaboration as a call to action - knowing its effect would be to strengthen our nation's intelligence and security posture.

- It's a call that the NRO shares with you - one that we have pursued with particular intensity these last 5 years.

- Which inspires me to share a call to action of my own as I close with you this evening - and it's simply this: the NRO is delivering something special, both in space and on the ground.
  - Now, it's up to our nation to exploit the fullness of its potential - leveraging the possibilities of our constellation, the computing power of our ground architecture, and the abundance of our collections.

- Today, we have the data and the tools to help answer some of the toughest intelligence challenges of our time; to strengthen security, readiness, and lethality; and effectively respond to disasters and humanitarian crises around the world.

- The future is here and the NRO is moving fast - faster than ever before. It's time for *all of us* to work together - government, industry, academia, allies, and other partners - by combining our respective authorities, capabilities, and talents to enable a more secure present and future.

- The NRO's committed, capable, and innovative government workforce has always led the way - and will continue to do so; conceiving, developing, and partnering to accomplish our nation's objectives.

- My commitment is that the NRO will continue to give its very best to secure and expand our nation's space-based intelligence advantage - bringing together brilliant scientists and engineers; collaborating with academia, industry, and allies to innovate remarkable ISR technology; always going above and beyond for mission success. Together we can do incredible things.

- Thanks, again, for the opportunity to update you on the essential work of the NRO. I look forward to our conversation after dinner. ###