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Closing Presentation Remarks

DARPA has an exciting portfolio of space science and technology that is really pushing the technological edge. However, to turn to a terrestrial metaphor: This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Space-based capabilities benefit from a broad spectrum of technologies. Space S&T is not its own world, and that is how we approach it at DARPA. Any office in DARPA can explore technology that advances new space capabilities and paradigms—and several DARPA offices are doing that right now. While space is somewhat unique, it

exemplifies DARPA’s role in advancing high technology. It’s all about bridging the gap: Solving the warfighter’s problems with tomorrow’s technologies—advancing science, accelerating fledgling ideas, and enhancing our space advantage.

DARPA was born in 1958 in response to Sputnik. Today, we’re in the midst of a major resurgence in the Agency’s space S&T activity. What demonstrates DARPA’s renewed commitment to National Security Space is our aggressive pursuit of a broad range of highly innovative technologies that promise to deliver truly revolutionary



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capabilities to the warfighter. The moment Secretary Rumsfeld tossed his Space Commission Report on Tony Tether’s desk, we began a concerted effort to get back into space S&T, and we’ve succeeded in a big way.

Currently, we’re focused on four critical areas:

- Access and infrastructure
- Space situational awareness
- Protection
- Space-based support to the warfighter

We’ve got a significant number of programs across those four domains, with many more seedling efforts putting bold ideas to the test. Not every project is a success, but every project is DARPA-hard and every project has the promise of advancing revolutionary ideas.

Sometimes you have to look at lots of pitches before you hit that home run. And without question, home runs are what we’re after. We need your new ideas.

Unlike the Services’ S&T efforts, DARPA’s space efforts focus on the far side, the forward edge of technology. That’s our place in the “innovation spectrum.” With every program we consider, we’re asking ourselves at least two questions:

First, is it DARPA-hard? That is, does it present a high chance of failure? Forget the sure bets; that’s not our business. If it’s not DARPA-hard, let someone else do it. Conventional wisdom leads so many space program managers to be risk adverse. In DARPA, we welcome risk; without it, we will not provide the warfighter with the options and capabilities needed in this uncertain world. The problem isn’t when you try and fail. The problem is when you fail to try.



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Our second question is: Do we have a customer, a partner? That's a key question because we are needs-focused, not requirements-focused, no matter how far out in the future we're working. That's why we work so closely with our S&T transition partners. It's why we maintain close relationships with the Services, the Combatant Commands like STRATCOM, and MDA, NRO, academia, and industry. It's why we seek warfighters to get their view on what works and what doesn't.

I told you we're after the home runs, the cannon shots that change the nature of the game. We know a lot of victories depend on base hits, especially in the bottom of the ninth.

And that's never been truer than it is today. We never forget we're a nation at war. That's our reality since 9/11. We never stop looking for ways to keep space as a US strategic advantage. We may take our vantage point from the future, but we maintain our sense of urgency from the needs of the present. That's why we're working with our partners to identify synergies where cooperation and integration can put some capabilities in the hands of warfighters in days or weeks, instead of the usual months or years.

Whether we are looking for a new paradigm like near-space or in deep space; whether we are talking about improving access to space or space situational awareness; whether we are talking about space mission protection or freedom of action in space—it's all to provide the warfighter dominant

space capabilities, available on demand, to decisively influence military operations on the ground, on the sea, and in the air.

Space, like aviation, and the sea before, is the recognized bastion of US advantage. We cannot fail to preserve that advantage. Our goal in S&T is to get there quickly and stay there efficiently and affordably; provide superior eyes in the sky; and ensure our space assets are safe and that no adversary achieves space superiority.

In space and near-space, our universe of ideas is always expanding, and that's where you come in. We want to know how we can build a satellite in a year; how we can launch one in 24 hours; once launched, how we can operate it on the first orbit; and how we can dedicate space assets to individual combatant commanders.

Now you may be saying Dick McCormick's gone off the deep end. Everyone knows those things can't be done. You know how we react when we hear, 'Everyone knows'? Great ideas—break-the-mold ideas—always look implausible, impossible, and just downright crazy. That's why they're DARPA-hard. That's why we're here, and why you're here.

We need to hear from you, because you can help us advance our mission. Talk to one of our program managers about joining our team or, better yet, become a program manager and help lead our team. We'll find a home for your home run idea.