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MAJCOMs/FLDCOMs/FOAs/DRUs

FROM: HQ USSF/COO  
2020 Space Force Pentagon  
Washington D.C. 20330-2000

SUBJECT: Space Force Guidance Memorandum 2026-10-01 Guidance Memorandum Establishing  
Space Force Assessments

By Order of the Chief of Space Operations, this Guidance Memorandum is the first instance of a to-be published Space Force Instruction publication on assessments governance. This Guidance Memorandum is the initial guidance from the Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Operations, and Nuclear (SF/COO) for conducting strategic assessments across the service. This Guidance Memorandum establishes organizational responsibilities, authorities, and processes for the management of United States Space Force (USSF) assessments. This document provides guidance and direction to codify the evolving roles and responsibilities of Field Commands (FLDCOMs), and Component Field Commands (C-FLDCOM) (i.e. Service Components) in support of or to the USSF mission to secure our nation's interests in, from, and to space through a robust and dedicated assessment process. To the extent its directions are inconsistent with other HQSF publications, the information herein prevails IAW DAFI 90-160.

**COMPLIANCE:** Compliance with this publication is mandatory. **ACCESSIBILITY:** The publication is available for downloading or ordering on the e-Publishing website at [www.e-publishing.af.mil](http://www.e-publishing.af.mil).

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<http://dpclo.defense.gov/Privacy/SORNs.aspx>.

This memorandum becomes void after one year has elapsed from the date of this memorandum, or upon publishing of a new publication permanently establishing this guidance, whichever is earlier.

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## Attachment

### Space Force Assessments

#### Chapter 1 GUIDANCE

**1. Purpose.** This Space Force Guidance Memorandum (SPFGM) provides clarification on the purpose and conduct of USSF assessments, which provide actionable, data-driven recommendations to senior leaders for decision-making. Assessments are conducted according to Space Doctrine Publication 5-0, *Planning*, and occur at all levels. NOTE: Assessments measure progress towards objectives, identify potential problems, provide evaluations of operation and provide insight for the need to adjust plans. Inspections, in a broader sense, contribute to this assessment process by providing data and insights into the effectiveness of processes, equipment, and personnel. DAFI 90-302 *The Inspection System of the Department of the Air Force* provides the authoritative DAF guidance, instruction, and policy for conducting IG inspections which are conducted under statutory authority defined by Congress and higher Inspector General guidance. This guidance does not supplement, implement, contradict, or replace DAFI 90-302. While an IG inspection, as defined in DAFI 90-302, may include assessments, for purposes of this publication, internal strategic assessments conducted by the service are not bound by the statutory requirements of any inspector general and are routine parts of planning and execution processes according to SDP 5-0.

- 1.1. As defined by JP 3-0, *Joint Campaigns and Operations*, assessments are a tool used as part of a continuous process that measures the overall effectiveness of employing capabilities, determining the progress toward accomplishing a task, or achieving an objective or meeting a standard at all levels, from tactical to strategic. Assessments are conducted at all levels of the USSF. Although each echelon has their own specific focus, they form a hierarchical structure through which assessments interact. Typically, assessments at the Space Staff and FLDCOM (or C-FLDCOM) levels concentrate on broader effects and objectives, while assessments below those levels primarily focus on tasks. Properly focused analysis and collection at each level of the USSF reduces redundancy and enhances the effectiveness of comprehensive assessments. Integrated and synchronized assessments form a feedback loop that drives continuous improvement. By continually evaluating outcomes, leaders can refine strategies, adjust priorities, and optimize resources. This feedback-driven approach ensures lessons learned are incorporated into future actions, promoting ongoing improvement in operations and decision-making.
- 1.2. Assessment reports provide actionable recommendations to advocate for resources, inform decisions related to optimizing efforts and upskilling personnel to achieve operational objectives, highlight success or milestones, identify areas that need improvement, generate inputs for the budget, and more. These assessments serve to empower commanders to make actionable changes to increase the mission effectiveness of the organization. These recommendations inform inputs into the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) process, the Joint Capabilities and Integration Development System process, new or updated guidance to the force/unit, updated organizational processes, or any other means

deemed appropriate for implementation. Any recommendations generated from assessments may become formal tasks with specific requirements, based on senior leader direction/discretion. Recommendations to senior leaders aid in the data-driven decision-making on risk management and resource allocation at all levels.

- 1.3. Since its inception, the USSF has continuously evolved its policies and processes, deploying advanced capabilities with the urgency demanded by the current strategic environment. This demand for rapid development places increased emphasis on comprehensive assessments, enabling commanders to accurately evaluate their tactical, operational, and strategic posture. Assessments are crucial for effectively allocating and prioritizing resources and adapting to a dynamic environment. This evolving landscape presents opportunities for all USSF organizations to refine their priorities, proactively address organizational gaps, and mitigate potential shortfalls. A unified approach to these challenges is essential for deploying combat-ready forces, fostering the Guardian spirit, and forging strong partnerships that enhance joint operations.
- 1.4. DAFI 90-302 *The Inspection System of the Department of the Air Force* provides policy for inspections involving Air Force and Space Force organizations/units, processes, programs, and procedures. It additionally establishes Department-wide Inspector General (IG) inspection requirements. The Space Force IG and USSF FLDCOM IGs are the appropriate authorities for publishing separate guidance implementing DAFI 90-302 for the USSF.
- 1.5. Units at all levels have a multitude of required inspections, assessments and evaluations conducted for many reasons by different organizations under policy, guidance and statutory authority. Assessments are commander-centric and designed to support commanders' decision-making. These inspections, assessments and evaluations provide input for decisions, processes, and required information throughout the Space Force and wider Department of Defense. Nothing in this guidance is intended to leverage an additional standing inspection, assessment or evaluation on any unit, at any level. It is to remind commanders of their responsibilities to conduct assessments as they deem necessary, and as directed by current policy, and that additional assessments may be directed by HQSF to answer specific, strategic questions to inform senior leaders in the execution of their roles and responsibilities. Commanders should leverage already available data collected in support of routine operations, or as part of previous inspections, assessments, and evaluations to maximize efficiency of limited resources to support all inspection, assessment, and evaluation requirements.
- 1.6. Further guidance on purpose, scope, and methodology for conducting different types of assessments can be found in the references at Attachment 1. HQSF terms of reference for assessments are also contained in Attachment 1.

## **Chapter 2**

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**2. Overview.** The *Joint Staff Commander's Handbook for Assessment Planning and Execution* states that “assessments occur at all levels.” All USSF echelons of command have the authority and responsibility to conduct assessments, appropriate within their span of control, to increase the mission effectiveness of their organization. While assessments can occur in all units across the USSF, specific organizations have unique assessment roles and responsibilities.

**2.1 Force Assessments Division (SF/S3A). Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive (HAFMD) 2-5 designates the Chief Operations Officer (COO) as responsible for strategic assessments, delegating execution authority to SF/S3A.**

- 2.1.1.** SF/S3A conducts strategic-level assessments to inform key processes, such as the PPB&E cycle, and drive continuous improvement across the USSF. Additionally, SF/S3A supports assessments conducted by the DAF, Joint Staff, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), and others, as required.
- 2.1.2.** To effectively accomplish its mission, SF/S3A maintains direct liaison authorized (DIRLAUTH) relationships with subordinate FLDCOMs, C-FLDCOMs, Direct Reporting Units (DRUs), Joint Staff, and the Space Staff. These DIRLAUTH relationships allow SF/S3A to efficiently coordinate, collect information, and share assessment findings. Having these direct lines of communication streamlines the assessment process and avoids bureaucratic delays. It facilitates information sharing and ensures assessments are informed by the perspectives of various stakeholders.
- 2.1.3.** There may be instances when senior leaders at Space Staff or above will direct the execution of an assessment. It may be appropriate for these assessments to be completed by a subordinate command due to the nature of the assessment. At the discretion of the Chief of Space Operations (CSO), as delegated to the COO, SF/S3A is authorized to task subordinate units, as required, to accomplish assessment functions. Upon completion, tasked units will submit a final assessment report to SF/S3A. These assessments may consist of service-wide, joint, congressionally mandated, and/or other federal agency assessments and inquiries.
- 2.1.4.** SF/S3A is the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) for Space Staff policy and guidance on assessments, aiding coordination across Space Staff organizations as required. This may include hosting working groups (quarterly or semi-annually) to synchronize and enhance collaboration, foster an environment to provide a standardized way to perform assessments, and share training resources and guidance. SF/S3A collaborates with stakeholders across the USSF and DAF to gather and share information, conduct assessments, and inform senior leader decision-making.
- 2.1.5.** FLDCOMs and C-FLDCOMs are encouraged to keep SF/S3A apprised when conducting internal assessments. SF/S3A has DIRLAUTH with all USSF organizations and is required to have insight on subordinate HQ assessments with the goal of performing strategic-level trend analysis and receiving data from across the service.

- 2.2. Space Force/Directorate of Analysis (SF/S9).** SF/S9 serves as the analysis lead for the USSF. The directorate, in close collaboration with SF/S3A, will provide direct, defensible, and timely analytic expertise as required to support the overall assessment process to ensure unbiased analysis. SF/S9 provides analytic expertise in defining measures, objectives, and criteria areas, identifying audiences, developing questionnaires, assessing methods of analysis, automating processes, and conducting data analytics.
- 2.3. Space Force Director of Staff (SF/DS).** The CSO has identified SF/DS as the OPR for validating and tracking the progress of recommendations generated from strategic-level assessments. SF/DS synchronizes staff actions and decision forums to achieve the CSO's intent, driving strategic alignment of tasks to CSO priorities, facilitating the efficient execution of follow-on actions directly with any applicable stakeholders via an approved forum (e.g. L2 Council, Deputies Council, or any other forum deemed appropriate by the SF/DS office).
- 2.4. Space Staff L2s.** The Space Staff directorates are encouraged to conduct assessments IAW their roles and responsibilities as outlined in their respective Mission Directives. Each L2 will conduct assessments IAW local procedures and/or guidance.
- 2.4.1.** The Office of the Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Personnel (SF/S1) serves as the OPR for human capital strategy; military and civilian personnel development; recruiting, accessing, retention, promotions, performance evaluation, separations, and retirement; and manpower policy, resourcing, requirements and manpower assessments.
- 2.4.2.** The Deputy Chief of Space Operations (DCSO) for Intelligence (SF/S2) serves as the OPR for assessments related to intelligence activities, guidance, policies, and programming for the Space Force Intelligence Enterprise; and will specifically serve as the USSF OPR for the Chairman's Annual Threat Assessment.
- 2.4.3.** The Office of the Chief Operations Officer (SF/S3/4/7/10, known as COO) serves as the OPR for assessments related to space operations, nuclear deterrence, Operational Test and Training Infrastructure (OTTI), training, exercises, force generation, Space Force generation, readiness, force presentation, training and exercises, and sustainment and logistics.
- 2.4.4.** Space Force Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Strategy, Plans, Programs, and Requirements (SF/S5/8), also known as the Chief Strategy and Resourcing Officer (CSRO) serves as the OPR for assessments concerning carrying out and executing long-range resource allocation and developing, directing, and conducting programming activities necessary to complete the service Program Objective Memorandum, space strategies and policies, strategic plans, USSF Objective Force and requirements to be provided to Joint Force Commanders. The CSRO is the USSF OPR for the Joint Staff's Annual Joint Assessment, Chairman's Gap Assessment (CGA), and the Strategic Readiness Assessment. The CSRO will conduct relevant assessments, IAW local policies and/or guidance.

2.4.5. The Office of Space Operations for Cyber and Data (SF/S6) serve as the OPR for data transport networks, cyberspace tool development, digital infrastructure and digital environments, advanced digital technologies, Artificial Intelligence (AI) initiatives, electromagnetic spectrum operations, mission networks, satellite communications, and Combined Joint All Domain Command and Control (CJADC2) related assessments.

2.5. **Field Commands and Direct Reporting Units.** FLDCOM/CCs and DRU/CCs conduct assessments of their respective mission areas within their authority and area of operations. Each FLDCOM and subordinate assessment offices/teams are recommended to conduct operational and tactical assessments, as required.

2.5.1. If FLDCOMs complete an annual assessment plan, FLDCOMs are requested to submit their plan to SF/S3A for situational awareness. This plan should note significant, planned assessments, with the intent to synchronize and coordinate assessments, wherever possible (not to overburden individual organizations or units). Additionally, assessment plans will allow the FLDCOMs to coordinate horizontally, to leverage already planned assessments whenever possible (see Figure 1).

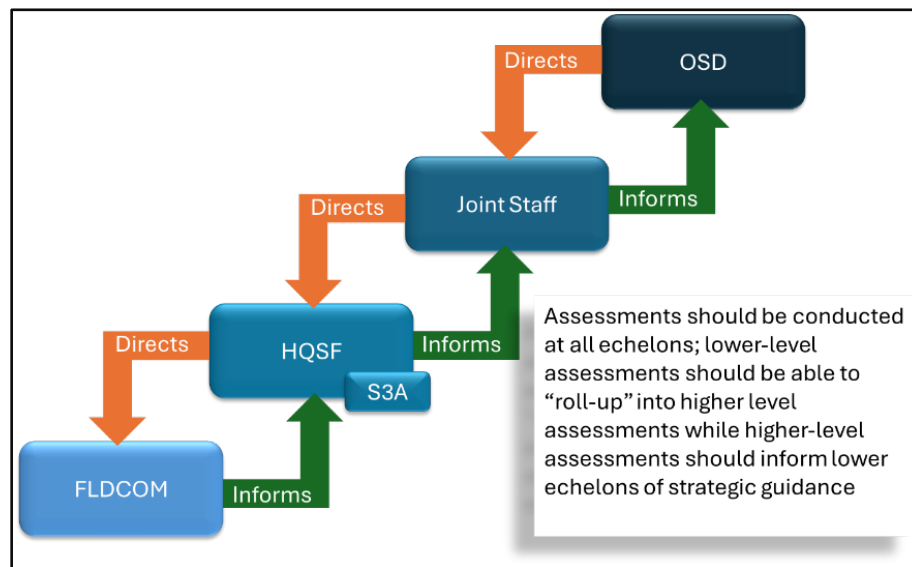


Figure 1. Assessment Hierarchy

2.5.2. At the discretion of the FLDCOM/CC, respective assessment offices/teams are encouraged to submit any assessment reports that provide opportunities for Space Staff to influence resourcing decisions and/or policies. This report should highlight recurring trends/issues that require Space Staff action.

2.6. **Inspector General of the Department of the Air Force (SAF/IG)** SAF/IG conducts IG inspections under the authorities and scope outlined in DAFI 90-302. To the maximum extent practicable, Space Force offices conducting assessments should coordinate with the appropriate IG to reduce duplication of effort and efficiently utilize resources.

## Attachment 1

### Glossary of References and Supporting Information

#### Terms:

**Analysis** - A systematic examination and interpretation of data and information, breaking down complex information into smaller parts to understand complex situations, identify trends, and inform decision-making. Assessments use analysis to establish a comparative framework (current vs. desired state), integrate multiple analyses to provide a comprehensive picture (holistic view), focus on actionable recommendations (what to do about the “what” and “why”), and drive decision-making and course correction (direction).

**Assessment** - A continuous process analyzing current efforts in relation to desired objectives to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. Leveraging various analytical methods, assessments produce actionable recommendations for informed decision-making.

**Assurance** - Proactive risk mitigation and quality control to prevent problems. Assessment is more reactive, examining what has happened and how to improve future performance.

**Capability** - The ability to complete a task or execute a course of action under specified conditions and level of performance. (Source: CJCSI 5123.01I)

**DOTmLPF-P** - A framework used to analyze and identify solutions for capability gaps, encompassing Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy.

**Evaluations** - Often involve grading or rating performance, determining suitability for a specific purpose or the effectiveness of training or exercises. While they may identify areas for improvement, the primary purpose is to make a judgement about overall effectiveness or assigning a “grade” to determine whether something meets pre-defined standards. Assessments can involve evaluation, but their primary focus is on identifying actionable improvements, not on grading performance.

**Framework** - A structured set of concepts, principles, and practices that provides a foundation for organizing, planning, and executing activities within a specific domain to offer a common perspective for understanding complex issues and facilitate coordinated action. It is not a rigid set of rules, but rather a flexible guide that can be adapted for specific purposes. Often in the form of models, processes, or doctrines that are used to guide everything from strategic planning and capability development to operational execution and assessment. Examples include DOTmLPF-P for capability development, Joint Planning Process (JPP) for operational planning, and People, Process, Products (PPP) for organizational performance.

**IG Inspections** – Any IG-led effort to evaluate an organization, function, or process by any means or method, including surveys, interviews, assessments, evaluations, exercises, and audits (excluding audits conducted under the authority of the Secretary of the Air Force Auditor

General [SAF/AG] or Article 6 Inspections conducted under the authority of The Judge Advocate General [AF/JA].

**Joint Planning Process (JPP)** - An orderly, analytical set of logical steps to frame a problem; examine a mission; develop, analyze, and compare alternative COAs; select the best COA; and produce or order. (JP 5-0)

**Measure of Effectiveness (MOE)** - A criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect. (JP 3-0)

**Measure of Performance (MOP)** - A criterion used to assess friendly actions that are tied to measuring task accomplishment. (JP 3-0)

**Performance** - In terms of assessments, performance refers to the effectiveness and efficiency of a mission, system, task, effort, or process in achieving its specified objectives. Assessments measures performance by comparing the current state against established standards, goals, or desired end states. This comparison helps with SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to inform recommendations, enhance future performance, and achieve desired outcomes.

**Questionnaire** - A structured set of questions used to gather data and insights from individuals or groups. It serves as a tool within the broader assessment process, helping to understand the current state, identify gaps and opportunities, and inform recommendations for improvement. Types of questions can be multiple choice, rating scales, and open-ended with the intent of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data.

**Requirement** - A capability which is needed to meet an organization's roles, functions, and missions in current or future operations to the greatest extent possible. (Source: CJCSI 5123.01)

**Skill** - A present, observable, and measurable capability to perform related tasks. For example, in the domain of work, example skills may include time management, typing, or physical lifting.

**Subject Matter Expert** - A person with bona fide expert knowledge about what it takes to do a particular job and often used as a reference.

### **References:**

*Commander's Handbook for Assessment Planning and Execution*, 9 September 2011  
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**Abbreviations and Acronyms:**

**AF**—Air Force  
**AFI**—Air Force Instruction  
**AI**—Artificial Intelligence  
**C-FLDCOM**—Component Field Command  
**CJADC2**—Combined Joint All Domain Command and Control  
**COO**—Chief Operations Officer  
**CSO**—Chief of Space Operations  
**CSRO**—Chief Strategy and Resourcing Officer (Deputy Chief of Space Operations, Strategy, Plans, Programs, and Requirements)  
**DAF**—Department of the Air Force  
**DAFI**—Department of the Air Force Instruction  
**DCSO**—Deputy Chief of Space Operations  
**DEPS**—DoD Enterprise Portal Service  
**DIRLAUTH**—Direct Liaison Authorized  
**DOTmLPF-P**—Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facility-Policy  
**DRRS**—Defense Readiness Reporting System  
**DRU**—Direct Reporting Units  
**FLDCOM**—Field Command  
**HAFMD**—Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive  
**IAW**—In Accordance With  
**MOE**—Measure of Effectiveness  
**MOP**—Measure of Performance  
**OPR**—Office of Primary Responsibility  
**OTTI**—Operational Test and Training Infrastructure  
**PPB&E**—Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution  
**RDS**—Records Disposition Schedule  
**SECAF**—Secretary of the Air Force  
**SME**—Subject Matter Expert  
**SORN**—System of Record Notices  
**SPFGM**—Space Force Guidance Memorandum  
**USSF**—United States Space Force

**Office Symbols:**

**OSD**—Office of the Secretary of Defense  
**SAF/FM**—Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Financial Management and Comptroller)

**SF/COO**—Space Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Cyber and Nuclear, also known as Chief Operations Officer (COO)

**SF/DS**—Space Force Director of Staff

**SF/S1**—Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Personnel

**SF/S2**—Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Intelligence

**SF/S3A**—Force Assessments

**SF/S3/4/7/10**—The Office of the Chief Operations Officer

**SF/S5/8**—Space Force Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Strategy, Plans, Program, and Requirements, also known as Chief Strategy and Resourcing Officer Directorate (CSRO)

**SF/S6**—Space Operations for Cyber and Data Directorate

**SF/S9**—Space Force Directorate of Analysis