

From Orbit to Objective: Space and the Future of Conflict

Description

Space is no longer a silent backdrop to conflict—it is a contested domain that enables, shapes, and increasingly defines how wars are fought. In this episode, Ben Jebb and Charlie McGillis sit down with Dr. James Kiras and General Stephen Whiting to examine the strategic importance of space in both great power competition and irregular warfare. The discussion explores how modern military operations rely on space-based capabilities for precision, synchronization, intelligence, and global reach—and what happens when those capabilities are contested.

The conversation also dives into the evolving “SOF-space-cyber triad,” highlighting how special operations forces, space professionals, and cyber operators can integrate to create complex dilemmas for adversaries. From maneuver warfare in orbit to countering Chinese influence campaigns in the Global South, the episode underscores a critical takeaway: space superiority is not automatic. It must be defended, integrated, and deliberately incorporated into joint campaigning if the United States and its partners are to preserve their strategic advantage.

[Dr. James Kiras](#) is Professor of Strategy at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS) at Air University. A leading scholar on special operations and irregular warfare, his research focuses on strategy, special operations theory, and the integration of emerging domains into modern conflict.

[General Stephen N. Whiting](#) is the Commander of United States Space Command, where he leads joint forces responsible for military operations in the space domain. A career Air Force officer with extensive experience in space operations and national security strategy, he oversees efforts to defend U.S. and allied interests in an increasingly contested and competitive space environment.

[Ben Jebb](#) and [Charlie McGillis](#) are the hosts for this episode. Please reach out to Ben and Charlie with any questions about this episode or the Irregular Warfare Podcast.

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Date Created

2026/03/20