

Dr. Sean M. Kirkpatrick
Director, All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO)

Dr. Kirkpatrick was asked by USD(I&S) to stand-up and lead AARO in early 2022. Known as Dr. K to his staff and team, he brings over two decades of experience and a significant depth of expertise in scientific and technical intelligence (S&TI), S&TI and space policy, research and development, acquisitions, and operations, specializing in space/counterspace mission areas.

Dr. Kirkpatrick was born in Columbus, GA to an Army family. He grew up in the Atlanta area, where he attended the University of Georgia as an undergraduate, to study physics. Dr. Kirkpatrick finished his Ph.D. work in nonlinear and nonequilibrium phonon dynamics of rare earth doped fluoride crystals also at the University of Georgia, and is currently an adjunct professor at UGA.

Dr. Kirkpatrick began his career in Defense and Intelligence related science and technology immediately out of graduate school. After receiving his Ph.D. in Physics in 1995, he subsequently took a postdoctoral position at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, investigating laser-induced molecular vibrations of high explosives under an AFOSR program. In 1996, he was offered a National Research Council Fellowship at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory in Washington D.C. investigating novel solid-state lasers for the Department of the Navy. In 1997, he was recruited by the Air Force Research Laboratory to build an Ultrafast Laser Physics Lab to investigate nonlinear optics, novel ultrafast spectroscopic methods, and nonlinear micro/nano-fabrication techniques for the Air Force. In 2003 he was offered a program manager position in the National Reconnaissance Office, and converted to CIA in 2005. In 2007, he was assigned as Chief Technology Officer in a joint CIA-DIA program office, where he later became division chief as a DIA officer. In 2010 he was asked to serve as the space control portfolio manager for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Space and Intelligence, Office of the Secretary of Defense.

In 2012 he returned to DIA, and served as the Defense Intelligence Officer for Scientific and Technical Intelligence, serving as the Department of Defense's counterpart to the National Intelligence Manager for Science and Technology until 2016. Towards the end of his tenure as DIO/S&TI, Dr. Kirkpatrick served on special assignment to the Principal Deputy Director National Intelligence leading the Intelligence Community's support to the Joint Interagency Combined Space Operations Center.

From 2016 to his current assignment, Dr. Kirkpatrick served in a variety of no-fail roles including Deputy Director of Intelligence, US Strategic Command; Director, National Security Strategy, National Security Council; Deputy Director of Intelligence and the DNI Representative for USSPACECOM. The USSPACECOM Intelligence Enterprise was the fifth organization he has been the IC lead for establishment. His most recent assignment was as Chief Scientist at DIA's Missile and Space Intelligence Center.

Dr. Kirkpatrick is the recipient of several scientific and intelligence awards. These include the National Intelligence Exceptional Achievement Medal, four National Intelligence Collaboration medallions, the NRO Innovation and Achievement Award, the Cleary Award for Scientific Excellence, and the DIA Director's Award for Excellence. Dr. Kirkpatrick holds 2 open patents and has contributed to several scientific books on nonlinear phenomena as well as written multiple strategies for the National and Defense Intelligence Communities. He was appointed to the Senior Service in 2012.