

Derek M. Tournear, Ph.D.
Director, Space Development Agency

Dr. Derek Tournear is the Director of the Space Development Agency (SDA). Established in March 2019, SDA is recognized as the Department of Defense's constructive disruptor for space acquisition. SDA will quickly deliver much needed space-based capabilities to the joint warfighter to support terrestrial missions through development, fielding, and operation of the Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture.

Before leading SDA, Dr. Tournear most recently served as Assistant Director of Research and Development for Space within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering where he was responsible for coordinating all DoD efforts in space and initiating programs to address critical gaps.

Dr. Tournear previously held leadership roles in industry, most recently the director for Harris Corporation Space & Intelligence research & development. Prior to industry, Dr. Tournear held program management positions at the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA) in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). He has professional experience at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) managing intelligence and defense programs.

Dr. Tournear has a Ph.D. in physics from Stanford University and a B.S. from Purdue University. In 2010 he received an Outstanding Alumnus award from Purdue University and a 2008 DARPA award for Outstanding Accomplishments in a Systems Technology Area. Dr. Tournear is a 2011, and 2020 recipient of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service, and a 2012 recipient of the Office of Director of National Intelligence Award for Exceptional Public Service. Additionally, Dr. Tournear is the recipient of a 2021 Space News award, 2021 Theodore Roosevelt Government Leadership award, 2021 Wash 100 award, as well as the 2022 Aviation Week Laureate. He was selected for the Senior Executive Service in 2019.

