

## Cyber Command awards \$54M contract for 'cyber carrier'

By: **Mark Pomerleau** (/author/mark-pomerleau) 📅 October 29

The U.S. Air Force has awarded Northrop Grumman a \$54 million contract to become the system coordinator for U.S. Cyber Command's top weapons system, the Unified Platform.

National security experts have described Unified Platform as the "cyber carrier" in which the Department of Defense's cyber warriors will plan and launch offensive and defensive cyber operations. As the Unified Platform systems coordinator, Northrop Grumman will "integrate disparate cyberspace platforms, enabling integrated management and synchronized cyber operations to give U.S. forces rapid access to a full spectrum of cyber capabilities," the company said in an Oct. 29 release.

The contract is to provide continuous development, integration, fielding and sustainment for the Unified Platform program. Work is expected to be completed by Oct. 31, 2021, according to a DoD announcement from Oct. 26. The Pentagon noted the award is the result of a competition with six bidders.

"Northrop Grumman is proud to partner with the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Cyber Command to deliver this critical mission capability in support of our nation's Cyber Mission Force," Linnie Haynesworth, sector vice president and general manager, cyber and intelligence mission solutions at Northrop Grumman Mission Systems said in an Oct. 29 release. "We look forward to delivering the integrated, shared capabilities that will give our cyber warfighters the edge in cyberspace and across all domains."



(<https://www.fifthdomain.com/smr/federal-budget/2018/02/16/the-air-force-requested-30-million-to-develop-a-cyber-carrier/>)

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The Department of Defense's budget request for fiscal 2019 describes a plan to develop such a war-fighting platform for Cyber Command.

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As Fifth Domain previously reported, a formal request for proposals for Unified Platform was released through the General Services Administration's premier enterprise Alliant Governmentwide Acquisition Contract vehicle.



(<https://www.fifthdomain.com/dod/cybercom/2018/06/29/cyber-command-moves-closer-to-a-major-new-weapon/>)

**Cyber Command moves closer to a major new weapon**  
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A proposal for the next generation cyber operations platform went out to industry recently, however, details are scarce.

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Under this model, GSA completes much of the initial contracting legwork and, in this case, allows the Air Force to focus on the specific technical requirements, sources said. Companies compete to be eligible for task orders under the Alliant contract and then GSA selects contractors who compete against each other for individual task orders on the final program. This means, only vetted companies would work on the program.

While the Air Force is working as the executive agent on behalf of Cyber Command and all the other service cyber components for Unified Platform, Cyber Command's top acquisition official said earlier this year that the program won't fully officially transition to the Air Force until 2019.



(<https://www.fifthdomain.com/dod/cybercom/2018/09/07/refining-the-defense-departments-cyberwarrior-carrier/>)

**Refining the Defense Department's cyberwarrior 'carrier'**

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All the service components are providing input on the development of the next-generation cyber operations platform.

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Air Force officials, however, have said they plan to use rapid prototyping authorities and take an incremental, DevOps approach with Unified Platform.



(<https://www.fifthdomain.com/dod/cybercom/2018/09/18/air-force-will-use-new-authorities-for-cyber-carrier/>)

**Air Force will use new authorities for cyber carrier**

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The Air Force will be using Section 804 authorities to procure Unified Platform.

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Despite describing the pure necessity of the program, government leaders have provided little information about what Unified Platform will be, what it won't be and what it will include.

"We're working with Cyber Command to make sure we've got the requirement right for Unified Platform," Lt. Gen. Stephen Fogarty, commander of Army Cyber Command, said in August during a speech.

"Where I think we've got to ensure is we don't make this so large that it just becomes unsustainable ... this very bloated program," he told Fifth Domain in an interview during the same conference.

Some experts have described UP not necessarily as a platform, but a unifying architecture that ties various disparate offensive, defensive, planning and intelligence systems together.

George Franz, managing director with Accenture Federal Services and the former director of operations at Cyber Command told Fifth Domain this month that under the Unified Platform banner, forces will need a unifying architecture that standardizes how data is handled, how systems are integrated and how various mission pieces are connected together architecturally to enable joint forces command and control of a common set of applications.

He also noted that forces will want to flexibly substitute a set of tools in and out of the platform based on the mission.

Chris Valentino, director of Joint Cyberspace Programs for Northrop Grumman Mission Systems told Fifth Domain in August, that in a current as-is system, cyber protection team conducting a mission to determine whether another military or weapon system has vulnerabilities might collect that information on a laptop, where the data is analyzed and a report is generated/

In theory, Unified Platform would allow those teams to do their mission and allow other forces, those potentially conducting a similar mission, to draw upon the original data set without having to pass the laptop around, email files or write things down on sticky notes, he said.

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