

CHINA AND THE NEW NATIONAL SECURITY SPACE STRATEGY

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I plan to describe our new National Security Space Strategy and its implications for our security relationship with China.

A New Strategy for New Challenges

During the past fifty years, U.S. leadership in space activities has benefited the global economy, enhanced our national security, strengthened international relations, advanced scientific discovery, and improved our way of life. Space is vital to our national security. Space-based capabilities enable our Armed Forces to see with clarity, communicate with certainty, navigate with accuracy, and operate with assurance. Maintaining the benefits afforded by space is also essential to economic growth and prosperity, not only in the United States, but also in China and around the world.

Space is increasingly a shared domain in which we operate with more and more space-faring countries – both close allies and potential adversaries. The space environment is changing in ways that are fundamental. Space is increasingly congested with increasing amounts of space debris; contested by a growing range of foreign counterspace capabilities; and competitive as more and more countries and companies operate in space. These “three C’s” pose new challenges for U.S. security.

In response to these challenges, Secretary of Defense Gates and Director of National Intelligence Clapper approved a new National Security Space Strategy, delivered to Congress in February. This strategy, which builds on the President’s National Security Strategy and National Space Policy, is significant in several regards: It is the first-ever National Security Space Strategy; and more importantly, it signals that – just as the space environment has changed –the way we advance our national security through space must also change.

The strategy establishes three broad objectives. One is obvious and enduring – to maintain and enhance the strategic advantages that we derive from space. The other two are equally important: to strengthen safety, stability, and security in space; and to energize our industrial base. In short, in addition to protecting the advantages we derive from space, we must also protect the domain itself and the industry that provides our capabilities.

To meet these three overarching objectives, the strategy establishes a series of strategic approaches. I urge you to read these in detail in the summary available at http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0111_nsss/. Allow me to touch on two aspects of the strategy particularly relevant to our relationship with China: promoting responsible use and deterring attack.

Promoting Responsible Use of Space

Promoting the responsible, peaceful, and safe use of space is one of the new strategy's key approaches, building on the President's National Space Policy. A more cooperative, predictable environment enhances our national security and discourages destabilizing behavior. The United States is leading by example. We will soon begin to provide pre-launch notification of DoD space launches, just as we notify ballistic missile launches. And, already, STRATCOM, a command first established for the sole purpose of delivering nuclear weapons, is now delivering warnings of potential collisions in space. It has signed agreements with over twenty satellite operators across the world to share space data and conjunction analysis.

The United States is also pursuing bilateral and multilateral transparency and confidence building measures to encourage responsible actions in, and the peaceful use of, space. With that in mind, we are currently evaluating the draft international "Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities" proposed by the European Union (EU). The Administration has not made a final determination on whether the United States can subscribe to the proposal, including what, if any, modifications would be necessary to gain our acceptance. The Department is assessing the Code's operational impact. Our preliminary review, however, is that it is a positive approach to promoting responsible behavior in space, enhancing our national security in the process.

Deterring Attack

The new strategy also reflects a new, comprehensive approach to deterring attack on our space systems. This is important as we monitor countries like China developing a wide range of counterspace capabilities. But our concern is not focused on only one country. The increasingly contested nature of space is most readily seen today in the jamming of commercial communications satellites by several foreign countries. These satellites carry content that is critical for commerce, democracy, and U.S. and allied military communications.

The new strategy's approach to deterrence has four layers:

- The first layer of deterrence is the establishment of norms of responsible behavior, as I have described. This helps separate responsible space-faring countries from those who act otherwise.
- The second layer of deterrence is the establishment of international partnerships. This forces an adversary to contemplate attacking the capabilities of many countries, not just one.
- The third layer of deterrence is increasing our resilience and capacity to operate in a degraded environment. This reduces the incentive to attack our space capabilities.

- The fourth layer of deterrence is a readiness and capability to respond in self-defense, and not necessarily in space. This complicates the calculus of a government considering an attack on our space assets.

Foundational to all of these layers is improved space situational awareness and an improved intelligence posture to better monitor and attribute activities in the space domain.

We should not think only about deterrence in space, but also about space in deterrence, including how a robust space posture can help deter terrestrial conflict, and how vulnerabilities in space can cause instability in a terrestrial crisis.

Implications for the U.S.-China Security Relationship

Our new strategy is designed to confront the “three C’s” – a space environment that is increasingly congested, contested, and competitive. China has contributed to all three:

- China’s 2007 test of a direct-ascent anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon against one of its own weather satellites created some 14 percent of the debris that we currently track. Over the last year, STRATCOM has issued close to seven hundred warnings of possible conjunctions with that debris.
- China is pursuing a broad range of counterspace capabilities in addition to the direct-ascent ASAT. The Department of Defense’s most recent report to Congress on *Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China* describes China’s multidimensional program to improve its capabilities to limit or prevent the use of space-based assets by potential adversaries during times of crisis or conflict.
- China’s nascent commercial space ambitions and increasing outreach to emerging spacefaring nations is a part of the more competitive nature of space.

While China has contributed to the new challenges in space, it also shares our interest in the safety, stability, and security of the domain. Indeed, at their January summit, President Obama and President Hu agreed that “the two countries have common interests in promoting the peaceful use of outer space and agree to take steps to enhance security in outer space.”

The United States looks forward to fora like the Strategic and Economic Dialogue to provide opportunities to discuss space and other strategic security issues with China’s senior political and military leaders. We see such dialogue as an opportunity to promote safe and responsible space operations and to help avoid mishaps, misperceptions, and mistrust, thereby strengthening stability in space.

Conclusion

In summary, we have not only a new National Space Policy, but also a new National Security Space Strategy to meet new challenges in space. Both documents state clearly that it is the shared interest of all nations to act responsibly in space. We seek to engage China in promoting its responsible use. At the same time, we are acting to bolster deterrence and, if deterrence fails, our ability to defend vital U.S. and allied interests in outer space.