PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION ISSUE PAPER SERIES

# National Security Space Association's Moorman Center for Space Studies Launches "Presidential Transition Issue Paper Series"

America stands at a crossroads. We now confront well-armed nation states that severely threaten U.S. national security. Bonded by a desire to overturn the international political and economic order established at the end of World War II, America's primary adversaries – China, Russia, North Korea and Iran – are coordinating their military plans, sharing lethal technology, and threatening the U.S. homeland and our friends and allies. These are not hypothetical threats; they are immediate and existential.

A key aspect of the confrontation between the U.S. and its friends and allies, on the one hand, and the new Axis of Autocracies, on the other, is the increasing competition for control over the ultimate high ground: space. The nation that controls space will have a distinct and actionable advantage in terrestrial conflict and also stands to reap the political and economic benefits associated with the exploitation of space, including the mineral and other resources located on the Moon that will help fuel the next scientific, technological and economic breakthroughs.

Most Americans take space for granted. Yet, it is central to the U.S. economy and our way of life. From guiding our vehicles to enabling communications networks and facilitating economic transactions ranging from high finance to the purchase of gas for our cars and groceries to feed our families, space support is ubiquitous. Without access to space-enabled services, our economy, our security and even our societal cohesion could collapse.

Space is the essential enabler of modern U.S. and allied military planning and operations. America's soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and guardians are highly dependent on space systems for vital services. Our adversaries fully understand these dependencies and are developing, testing and fielding a diverse array of tools needed to disrupt, degrade and destroy America's space systems. These include cyber weapons, electronic jammers, lasers to blind satellite imagery systems, various ground- and space-based kinetic kill systems, and even space-based nuclear weapons. Space is no longer a sanctuary – indeed, it has become a central battleground.

America is but a few months away from a highly consequential election to select the next President and a new Congress. All candidates should clearly convey that they understand the vital role space plays in our economic well-being and national defense, and articulate how they will address the growing threats to U.S. space systems and assure U.S. space superiority in the increasingly hostile international security environment.

The Moorman Center for Space Studies, the independent think-tank within the National Security Space Association, provides non-partisan, scholarly analysis and support to America's leaders in government and industry. Today we are pleased to launch our **"Presidential Transition Issue Paper Series"** with four papers written by noted space experts: **"Winning the Competition for Space Leadership"**, **"A Revitalized National Space Council: Key to Effective Governance"**, **"Ensuring U.S. National Security Space Forces Are Ready for Near-Term Conflict"**; and **"Cislunar Space Competition with China: Urgent Action Needed to Secure the Ultimate High Ground"**. These papers and the broader Series are intended to inform the Presidential candidates of critical national security space issues and help the American people assess the candidates' positions on matters of vital importance. Additional Transition papers will be issued in the coming weeks.

As always, we welcome your feedback. For more information, please contact Moorman Center for Space Studies Chair Chris Williams (chris.williams@nssaspace.org) or Matt McNitt (matt.mcnitt@nssaspace.org).

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PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION ISSUE PAPER SERIES

# Winning the Competition for Space Leadership

*by Marc Berkowitz*

The United States is the world's leader in the exploration and use of outer space. America became the preeminent spacefaring nation by winning the first space race with the Soviet Union. That contest was driven by the U.S.-Soviet geopolitical rivalry and run for the competitive advantages enabled by rocket and satellite technology. America's prowess in space operations contributes to all elements (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) of our national power. Space power is the total strength of a nation's capabilities to conduct and influence activities to, in, through, and from space to achieve its objectives.

America has leveraged its dominant position in space for political prestige, international influence, scientific knowledge, technological advancement, and economic prosperity, as well as U.S. and international security. Space capabilities are woven into the socioeconomic fabric of the nation, embedded in critical infrastructures, enable national essential functions, and contribute to America's way of life. Successive administrations of both political parties thus have declared for decades that access to and use of space are vital national interests of overriding importance to the nation's safety, integrity, and survival.

The United States is again engaged in a geostrategic rivalry with a critical astropolitical dimension which is extending across the Earth-Moon system. Foreign powers are eroding U.S. strategic advantages in space as well as threatening freedom of passage through and operations in the domain. Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea are led by autocratic regimes with revisionist or irridentist political objectives seeking to change the international order. They act independently and collude to undermine international norms of responsible behavior as well as threaten or use armed force to achieve their political objectives. All four countries possess anti-satellite (ASAT) or counterspace weapon systems which put U.S. vital interests in space at risk.

Near Earth space now reflects the complex and dangerous terrestrial security environment. Russia and China see space as a domain in which they can coerce America because of our dependence upon vulnerable space systems. They have conducted destructive tests of ASAT missiles which generated large amounts of orbital debris, endangered space flight safety, and harmed space environment sustainability. Both Russia and China have weaponized space by deploying and testing orbital weapons. China has tested a fractional orbital bombardment weapon on a hypersonic glide vehicle. Russia has attacked U.S. space systems employed by Ukraine to defend itself against Moscow's unlawful invasion. Moreover, it has developed and apparently is preparing to deploy a nuclear-armed ASAT weapon on-orbit in violation of the Outer Space Treaty.

China seeks to supplant the United States as the preeminent space power by its centennial anniversary in 2049, if not sooner. Beijing recognizes that space is the ultimate high ground and "the commanding height of strategic competition." The Chinese Communist Party aspires to accumulate power to dominate the ongoing geopolitical and astropolitical contests. It is executing a military-civil fusion strategy, vastly expanding its space posture and operations, and integrating space capabilities into plans for "precision-strike" and "system destruction" warfare.

Furthermore, the astropolitical competition is spreading to cislunar space, the region between geosynchronous Earth orbit and the Moon's surface. China continues to put infrastructure in place and conduct operations at Lagrange points, lunar transfer orbits, lunar orbits, and the Moon. It aims to use "strategic points, resources, and thoroughfares" in cislunar space to exert influence on or control over the Earth-Moon system. In particular, this includes the extraction of resources from the lunar surface estimated to be worth trillions of dollars to increase China's international competitiveness, wealth, and power. In this regard, China plans to land taikonauts on the Moon by 2030 and operate an International Lunar Research Station with Russia by 2035.

Despite entering the new space race with a considerable head start, America is at risk of losing its leadership position. Unfortunately, America has contributed to this situation through wavering political resolve, programmatic and fiscal instability, and risk averseness. Space assets are critical, however, to U.S. national, homeland, and economic security. They impact Americans' daily lives in countless ways. collect, generate, and relay an extraordinary volume and variety of data and information as well as help to control physical assets in all sixteen U.S. critical infrastructure sectors. Satellite internet, telecommunications, geospatial, and positioning, navigation, and timing services are now utilities. In today's global economy, space-derived data and information are engines of prosperity. According to the Space Foundation, the global space economy was valued at $570 billion in 2023.

Moreover, space capabilities are the leading edge of U.S. information-age power. Space operations enable U.S. global power projection with speed, precision, and lethality. They reduce the risk to U.S. and allied forces as well as help to minimize collateral damage. The U.S. armed forces are structured and postured based on the assumption of the assured availability of space services. They are heavily reliant and, in some cases, completely dependent upon space services to defend the nation and its interests abroad.

Disruption or loss of critical space mission capabilities would substantially increase the risk of strategic surprise, decrease combat effectiveness, increase the risks and costs of military operations, and complicate the ability to support defense commitments to allies and partners. Denial of mission-critical space capabilities could influence the course and outcome of conflict. Without the information provided by space assets, America could be reduced to a second or third tier industrial-age economic and military power or worse. The outcome of a conflict that begins in or extends to space could be the difference between victory, conquest, or even national survival.

The United States has the wherewithal to sustain its position as the world's preeminent space power. It has the necessary human capital, scientific knowledge, financial resources, technological capability, and industrial capacity. In comparison to its autocratic rivals, America also has the advantages of individual liberty, free enterprise, and allies with common values and interests. The United States must demonstrate sustained leadership and resolve to protect and advance its interests in space.

To win the ongoing geopolitical and astropolitical contests, America must restore clarity about its national purpose in space, reverse the erosion of its competitive advantages in the domain, and sustain its preeminence in space activities. Bold leadership and decisive action, utilizing all instruments of statecraft, are needed to protect and advance U.S. interests in space.

Consequently, the next President should:

- Establish a compelling vision, clear objectives, and policy guidance to restore America's national purpose in space.
- Formulate and implement a comprehensive national strategy which links objectives (ends), courses of action (ways), and resources (means) to sustain U.S. preeminence in space.
- Advocate for the peaceful uses of space, encourage other nations to adhere to the international space legal regime, and set appropriate precedents for norms of responsible behavior in space.
- Confront the unprecedented buildup of adversaries' space armaments (especially China and Russia), provocative or aggressive space actions, and their challenge to the freedom of space.
- Ensure the U.S. armed forces are structured, postured and resourced to deter or, if necessary, prevail in a crisis or conflict that involves space.
- Prioritize the acquisition and deployment of a dynamic, layered, space defense-in-depth.
- Prioritize winning the new space race to maintain America's leadership role in the domain, shape the space operating environment, and assure access to valuable resources in the solar system.
- Establish the statutory and regulatory framework to sustain the commercial space sector's growth and take full advantage of its goods and services to achieve national security objectives.
- Create the proper incentives and partnerships with private enterprises to enhance America's international competitiveness and ensure it wins the astropolitical contest.
- Lead and orchestrate international space cooperation for collective security or mutual defense.
- Inform the American people, Congress, allies, and partners about the importance of space to U.S. and international security, the vitality of the U.S. and global economies, and their quality of life.

*Marc Berkowitz serves as a member of the NSSA Board of Advisors.*

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PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION ISSUE PAPER SERIES

# A Revitalized National Space Council: Key to Effective Governance

*by Dr. Sean Kirkpatrick*

Space is a central element of the global competition for political, economic, military and technological supremacy. Will the high ground of space be dominated by America and its friends and allies or by Communist China and its revanchist partners who seek to overturn the international order established after World War II? The U.S. Government (USG) must put in place appropriate governance mechanisms that reflect the critical importance of space to America's future, assure timely policy generation and oversight of implementation, and enable more effective and efficient operations and synergies across the commercial, defense, intelligence, and civil space sectors. A revitalized National Space Council (NSpC) can and should play a central role in these activities.

When the NSpC was reestablished in 2017, gaps and seams among the NSpC, the National Security Council (NSC), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and other organizations initially emerged due to ambiguities in roles and responsibilities, authorities, and accountability. In particular, competition over which organization had the final word on National Security Space policy (the NSC or NSpC) became pronounced as the creation of the U.S. Space Force and re-establishment of U.S. Space Command were being discussed. These gaps and seams were resolved by the Vice President and senior leadership, but resurfaced after the change of administrations in 2020.

To date the issues overseen by the NSpC have largely reflected the personal interests of the Vice President. Going forward, the next President must set clear, ambitious goals for the nation's space program, and the Vice President, as Chair of the Council, must act to assure timely and effective implementation of the President's guidance and direction. Indeed, the goals and objectives for the NSpC should be tied directly to achieving broader U.S. political, military, economic, and scientific goals – and the Council should be judged by the extent to which it facilitates achievement of those national objectives. This will necessitate robust internal (e.g., interagency policy development and implementation, oversight of USG activities, etc.) and external activities (e.g., how space affects the U.S. economy, public education about the importance of preserving, protecting and defending space, etc.).

To reach its full potential, the NSpC must be institutionalized within the Executive Office of the President (EOP) structure, as opposed to remaining a separate activity within the Office of the Vice President. Also, it is vital for the NSpC to work collaboratively with other EOP organizations such as the NSC, OMB, National Economic Council, etc.

The ability of the NSpC Executive Secretary to oversee and drive the consensus-building necessary to govern the diverse nature of the U.S. space community, is also personality dependent, process dependent, and does not easily transcend administrations. Best practices suggest adoption of the Interagency Policy Committee (IPC) process (aka the Scowcroft process) and elevating the Executive Secretary to an Assistant to the President will enhance authority and oversight, governance, and efficiency. In addition, the NSpC must be resourced appropriately to handle the various diverse facets of its portfolio. Each major department and agency should provide detailees to support the effective and efficient operation of the NSpC.

With these objectives in mind, the next President should:

1. Provide overarching national policy guidance and direction on the goals and objectives of the nation's space programs and activities.
2. Direct establishment of the NSpC as an organizational element of the Executive Office of the President (EOP) and ensure appropriate resourcing, specify the roles and responsibilities of the NSpC, and delineate the governance processes and mechanisms to be adopted by the NSpC.
3. Direct the Vice President to institutionalize the priority, focus, and resources of the NSpC and assure integration of the NSpC's work across other relevant EOP organizations and processes. Require the Vice President to oversee regular audits of federal department and agency execution of Presidential guidance on national space policy, programs, and activities. And direct the NSpC Chair to employ the IPC method of governance.
4. Reclassify the NSpC Executive Secretary position as an Assistant to the President and empower that individual with a clear mandate to deliver on the President's highest priorities across the various space sectors.

5. Authorize the NSpC to establish non-permanent Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), user, stakeholder or other external advisory/evaluation boards as necessary to research, evaluate and develop recommendations for the NSpC. Use the NSpC as the main space advisory body for the President.
6. Direct the Vice President to prepare and carry out a national campaign to generate and sustain support from the American people for U.S. space activities across all sectors and improve communications to and from NSpC via web, social media, email, polling and other means.
7. Ensure bipartisan support and partnership through an annual Congressional engagement plan developed in partnership with OMB, NSC, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Rapid adoption and implementation of these recommendations should better position the National Space Council to ensure U.S. national security, civil, commercial and scientific space programs and activities are conducted consistent with the next President's bold vision for space. And they will enable the U.S. to more effectively compete with China, whose growing ambitions in space pose a fundamental challenge to U.S. interests.

*Dr. Sean Kirkpatrick is a member of the National Security Space Association's Board of Advisors.*

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PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION ISSUE PAPER SERIES

# Ensuring U.S. National Security Space Forces Are Ready for Near-Term Conflict

*by Chris Williams*

The next U.S. President will confront a dramatically worsening international security environment. The growing political, military and technological collusion between the new Axis powers (China, Russia, North Korea and Iran) poses a serious and growing threat to U.S. military forces and America's vital national interests. The United States faces the very real prospect of multiple simultaneous, high-intensity military crises or conflicts in Europe, the Middle East, Northeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Urgent steps are needed to assure U.S. national security space forces are optimized for near-term high-intensity conflict on a global scale.

There is a growing recognition that U.S. national security space systems, including Department of Defense (Title 10) and Intelligence Community (Title 50) capabilities as well as commercial systems, are essential to America's security and way of life. Without support from critical space systems, the U.S. ability to protect and defend its global interests would be severely degraded. More pointedly, whether America wins or loses the next war (or wars) may depend on the availability and effectiveness of U.S. space systems.

America's enemies fully recognize the central role that space systems play in modern warfare and are rapidly developing space and counterspace systems to counter U.S. advantages. Indeed, as noted by then Vice Chief of Space Operations General David T. Thompson, "Russia and China are attacking U.S. satellites every day". They have conducted jamming and electronic warfare attacks on U.S. Government and commercial satellite communications systems and networks, close approaches of U.S. high value space systems, laser "dazzling" of U.S. photoreconnaissance satellites, destructive and non-destructive tests of ground- and space-based kinetic energy ASAT systems, and cyber operations against space-enabled and -supported networks, among other actions.

In a scenario involving a Chinese blockade or invasion of Taiwan in 2026-27, for example, U.S. government and commercial space systems would be called upon to locate and track Chinese amphibious landing craft and other naval vessels, aircraft, and mobile missiles, provide assured communications to U.S. and friendly forces, enable precision long-range strikes and effective air and missile defense, and much more. The degradation of U.S. space capabilities and services could seriously hinder U.S. military operations and result in much higher casualties among U.S., allied, and friendly military forces and civilians.

In response to such threats, the U.S. has sought to enhance U.S. space resilience. This includes rapid fielding of proliferated low Earth orbit constellations and development of other active and passive measures intended to facilitate continued space operations in the event of enemy counterspace attacks. American Presidents from both political parties have highlighted the importance of countering adversary space systems and the Department of Defense (DoD) has publicly acknowledged deployment of a U.S. counterspace weapon system.

As important as these steps are, they are not enough. Bold action is needed to ensure U.S. space forces are ready for near-term, high-intensity conflict. The next President should promptly take the following actions:

- Declassify the "fact of" certain U.S. space and counterspace capabilities to bolster deterrence and enhance integration of such capabilities into U.S. war plans and operations. America's enemies must understand that the U.S. has the capabilities and will to withstand attacks on critical U.S. government and commercial space systems while at the same time counter adversary space systems that are used for targeting American and allied forces.
- Direct the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to jointly rationalize governance and align security policies and programs to enable U.S. national security space missions.*
- Strongly urge the Congress to quickly pass the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for FY 2025, and the Intelligence Authorization Act for FY 2025 and submit those bills for your signature. In addition, request that the Congress move expeditiously to pass an Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act to bolster key U.S. military and intelligence space capabilities, including government and commercial space systems and operations. These bills are urgently needed to strengthen the U.S. defense posture, enhance intra- and inter-regional deterrence, and address gaps in defense and intelligence space capabilities.

- Direct the SecDef to ensure that U.S. Space Force programs, activities and budgets are properly aligned so as to meet the near-term needs of the combatant commanders.
- Conduct a review of U.S. military operations plans and contingency plans for each of the theaters referenced above, including the space warfare aspects of those plans, and provide the SecDef with approvals and pre-delegated authorities needed to conduct timely and effective space and counterspace operations, as appropriate.
- Direct the SecDef to accelerate plans to effectively protect and defend critical U.S, allied, and commercial satellites from adversary attack. In addition, direct the SecDef and the DNI to jointly work with the private sector and allies to strengthen information-sharing on adversary threats to space systems (including space domain awareness data), coordinate on-orbit operations, and rapidly enhance the performance and survivability of U.S., allied, and commercial space systems.
- Direct the DNI to develop options for leveraging Presidential authorities to conduct covert action to enhance the U.S. ability to counter adversary space systems and supporting infrastructure, associated supply chains, and more. Strongly encourage the relevant Congressional committees to rapidly authorize and appropriate funding for any covert action programs.
- Direct the SecDef and DNI to take immediate steps to harden and shield critical U.S. space systems, networks, and components, including those for nuclear command, control and communications (NC3) and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), from ground- or space-based counterspace threats including deployment and detonation of the Russian nuclear ASAT.**
- Direct the Secretary of State and SecDef to launch a coordinated campaign to work with friends and allies to assure support for U.S. diplomatic efforts to bolster international cooperation on space security, while rejecting unverifiable and counterproductive space arms control measures proposed by Russia and China.

America is entering one of the most dangerous periods in its history. Space will play a decisive role in future conflicts with adversaries who seek to overturn the liberal political and economic order established by the United States and its friends and allies after World War II. A bold vision together with sustained near-term action is needed to assure and enhance the ability of U.S. space warriors to "fight tonight".

* See "Establish Governance and Align Security Policies and Programs to Enable U.S. National Security Space Missions" https://nssaspace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/pub_2020-10-29.pdf

** See "Russia's Space-Based, Nuclear-Armed Anti-Satellite Weapon: Implications and Response Options" https://nssaspace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Russian-Nuclear-ASAT.pdf

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PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION ISSUE PAPER SERIES

# Cislunar Space Competition With China: Urgent Action Needed to Secure the Ultimate High Ground

*by James Frelk & Chris Williams*

Like previous rivalries between nation-states throughout history, the U.S. and PRC are competing for political prestige, international influence, scientific knowledge, technological advancement, economic prosperity, and military power. The PRC sees itself in a new space race with America that it intends to win. The Sino-American rivalry to influence or control the physical and human geography of the world now extends from Earth to cislunar space – the line between the Earth and the Moon or the Moon's orbit – and is a direct outgrowth of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) aim to reestablish China as the world's dominant power. China considers space a "critical domain in international strategic competition."

China is conducting operations in cislunar space and has even more ambitious future space plans. Lagrange points, lunar transfer orbits, lunar orbits, and the Moon's surface are "strategic key points" and "strategic thoroughfares" in cislunar space from which China could exert influence in or control over the Earth- Moon system.

China's December 2020 Chang'e-5 mission to the near side of the moon returned samples of Helium-3. (Helium-3 is a non-radioactive isotope extremely valuable in medical devices, fusion reactors, and as a coolant for quantum computing.) On May 3, 2024, China landed Chang'e-6 in the South Pole-Aitken Basin on the far side of the Moon. These activities are intended to pave the way for future Chinese human presence on the Lunar surface and future missions to Mars. China's cislunar space operations are a means to gain access to the natural resources on the Moon and eventually other celestial bodies in the solar system and are important precursors to developing a permanent Chinese base for manned and unmanned operations on the lunar surface. China is moving out expeditiously to put in place the infrastructure necessary for trips to and from the Lunar surface to support PRC operations in space. It is worth emphasizing that China's space program is run by the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

The stratagems the CCP employs with respect to its space ambitions are consistent with how it pursues terrestrial objectives. Besides blandishment, inducement, and deception, the CCP uses coercion to erode established norms, undermine the rules-based international order, seize territory, and change international boundaries. China's efforts to exert influence or control over cislunar space will employ similar means and methods. This includes asserting claims of sovereignty, waging political, economic, and legal warfare, conducting grey zone operations, and developing advanced military and intelligence capabilities to coerce the U.S. and other nations to accede to the PRC's claims.

While some may discount China's cislunar space aspirations because the United States has already gone to the Moon, they are at risk of underestimating the impact. If the world perceives that the PRC is winning the competition with the United States over cislunar space, it would be a historic CCP accomplishment that diminishes America's political and economic prestige, international standing, and global influence.

The PRC likely will set precedents through cislunar space operations to establish a new, advantageous basis for customary international law. Indeed, China will likely employ political and legal warfare ("lawfare") tactics to justify multiple vectors of coercion, including the threat or use of armed force, to establish autocratic norms of behavior, undercut and change existing rules, claim territory, and in effect create its desired boundaries on Earth and in cislunar space. The CCP's pursuit of a dominant position in cislunar space would strengthen the economic element of its national power and weaken the United States and its allies. The PRC may establish an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in cislunar space, declare a Space Defense Identification Zone (SDIZ) and "keep out" zones to protect it, conduct in-situ resource utilization to support operations on the lunar surface, and extract valuable resources such as rare Earth materials and water on the Moon to increase its international competitiveness, wealth, and military power. Indeed, the CCP could move to monopolize the market for rare minerals on the Moon as well as the use of lunar water as an energy source. If PLA forces were in a commanding position atop the Earth-Moon system's gravity wells, this could enhance their ability to deny the U.S. freedom of action to use space systems as a force multiplier to enhance the combat effectiveness of its operational forces in other domains.

The U.S. Government has yet to identify cislunar space as a vital national interest, take the steps necessary to protect and promote America's interests in cislunar space, and counter China's strategy for dominating cislunar space. Hence, urgent action is needed to ensure the U.S. can compete effectively in the cislunar competition and secure the ultimate high ground.

To advance U.S. political, economic, technological and security interests in cislunar space, the next President should:

- Declare that advancing U.S. interests in cislunar space is a top national priority and direct the National Space Council to prepare an integrated National Strategy and Action Plan for cislunar Space that affirms U.S. vital interests and outlines the steps that relevant Federal departments and agencies must take to better position the U.S. to compete with China in cislunar space, including by promoting and enabling U.S. commercial cislunar space activities.
- Direct development of an integrated Government-wide strategy to better position the U.S. for the increasing competition between the U.S. and China in cislunar space. This includes, among other things, efforts to improve U.S. space domain awareness in cislunar space and to facilitate U.S. commercial sector leadership in space launch, exploration, and mining operations.**
- Direct the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to provide significant additional funding, beginning in Fiscal Year 2025, to relevant departments and agencies for cislunar space programs and activities.
- Direct relevant departments and agencies to reduce or eliminate regulatory and other barriers to U.S. commercial activities in cislunar space and to promulgate measures that incentivize and bolster U.S. competitiveness in cislunar space.
- Direct the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) to develop plans and programs to protect and defend U.S. interests in cislunar space. Also, direct the SecDef, in collaboration with other relevant department and agency heads, to rapidly develop and deploy a cislunar Space Domain Awareness capability that effectively leverages U.S. commercial SDA offerings.
- Direct the Director of National Intelligence to make China's plans for and activities in cislunar space a top priority for intelligence collection and analysis and to increase production of classified and unclassified analytic products on this topic.
- Direct the Secretary of State to enhance and expand U.S. diplomatic efforts aimed at advancing U.S. interests in cislunar space and countering China's use of lawfare and other tools that undermine U.S. interests and international principles and norms.
- Direct the Administrator of NASA to expand and accelerate efforts associated with the Artemis Accords.
- Work with the bipartisan leadership in Congress to pass legislation to promote U.S. commercial competitiveness in cislunar space.

The outcome of the U.S.-China competition in cislunar space will have profound implications for U.S. political, economic, technological, and security interests. A bold vision together with sustained leadership is needed to protect and advance U.S. national interests in this increasingly important region of space.

* This paper draws upon Marc Berkowitz and Chris Williams, "Strategic Implications of China's Cislunar Space Activities", https://nssaspace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Strategic-Implications-of-Chinas-Cislunar-Space-Activities-8.21-final.pdf

** See "Strategic Implications of China's Cislunar Space Activities" https://nssaspace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Strategic-Implications-of-Chinas-Cislunar-Space-Activities-8.21-final.pdf

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