



**Hearing on “The Rocket’s Red Glare: China’s Ambitions to Dominate Space”
April 3, 2025**

Opening Statement of Commissioner Michael Kuiken

Thank you all for joining us today. I extend my gratitude to our witnesses for their expertise.

I appreciate the Senate HELP Committee for allowing us to use their hearing room. Today, we examine a critical threat: China's rapid advancements in space. We must understand what this means for U.S. national security, technological leadership, and global influence.

What's happening in China's commercial and military space industry follows a familiar pattern. We've seen it with Huawei. We've seen it with semiconductors. We've seen it with solar panels. We've seen it with biotech.

China is building a massive manufacturing capability to dominate space. Their goal is to bifurcate the world into their sphere and ours. China has built this industry by stealing and buying American and European intellectual property.

During our recent "Made in China 2025" hearing, Dr. Drew Endy warned that we have 1000 days to not lose in biotech. The same urgency applies to space. We have no time to waste.

Since the Commission's last hearing on this topic in 2019, China's space ambitions have become achievements. Their civilian space milestones are not merely symbolic. They are calculated moves to challenge U.S. leadership.

By 2030, China plans to land on the moon and return samples from Mars. By 2035, they aim to establish an operational International Lunar Research Station with Russia. By the 2040s, China plans to expand its lunar base and explore beyond Mars and Jupiter. These are not distant dreams. They are concrete steps in a strategy to cement China's position as a global space power.

China's ambitions extend beyond exploration.

Their commercial space sector is booming. Once dominated by state-owned giants, China's commercial space industry expanded after 2014. The government opened the door to private investment. A wave of new companies has surged into the market. China's market more than doubled from \$113 billion in 2019 to \$268 billion in 2023. Beijing designated commercial space a "strategic emerging sector." Now, China's commercial space market is projected to reach \$900 billion by 2029.

Chinese companies are racing to deploy Reusable Launch Rockets and mega-constellations of satellites. They aim to crowd out U.S. companies and dominate space in the near term. China is already deploying cutting-edge quantum satellites while U.S. companies trail behind.

This is not just about technological bragging rights. China's expanding space power poses real military and economic challenges. The PLA's counterspace capabilities are advancing. Beijing's influence over global space governance is growing.

The United States cannot afford complacency.

Our technological innovation, talent development, and military readiness are being tested. Maintaining U.S. leadership requires cutting-edge technology. We must ensure the United States and our allies shape the rules for space operations.

Today, we welcome General Chance Saltzman, Chief of Space Operations for the U.S. Space Force. He will provide insights on the strategic stakes of U.S.-China competition in space. He will explain how the Department of Defense is preparing for this increasingly contested domain. Following General Saltzman, a panel of experts will examine China's military and commercial space capabilities and their implications for the United States.

With that, I'll turn it over to my colleague and co-chair for this hearing, Commissioner Cliff Sims.