



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

Opening Statement of Commissioner Cliff Sims

Thank you, Commissioner Kuiken.

The space race of the 20th century captured the imaginations and ambitions of the American people. However, before NASA’s Apollo 11 delivered “one giant leap for mankind,” the Soviet Union’s Sputnik 1 raised fears of the capabilities that could be unleashed by U.S. adversaries.

The question today is: Will the next "Sputnik moment" be "Made in China," or will the United States once again lead the way in the new space race? Now – as it was then – the country who wins this race toward the stars, will likely also be the country who’s this century’s defining power on earth.

During my tenure in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) under the leadership of then-DNI John Ratcliffe, Space was made a priority intelligence domain and Space Force was added as the 18th member of the U.S. intelligence community.

That was just over four years ago.

Earlier this year, I helped lead the transition of administrations inside one of our Intelligence agencies. As I got up to speed on various challenges and opportunities, I was struck by the progress the People’s Republic of China had made in some of the critical technologies that will define the future, including in Space.

China has become a peer competitor – and in some areas, the world’s leader – in key technologies where they were not on our level just a few short years ago.

According to ODNI’s Annual Threat Assessment released last week, China has achieved world-class status in all but a few space technologies. This development has enormous geopolitical, economic and military implications, which I look forward to discussing during today’s hearing.

The United States – our government, our private industry, and our People – must have a sense of urgency to win Space Race 2.0. But we should also have the confidence of knowing that we’ve won before, and we are well positioned to win again.

The U.S. remains the global leader in launch capabilities. Our commercial space industry is the envy of the world – no other country is catching rockets with chopsticks so they can be sent back into space again. The Trump administration has ambitious goals for the “Golden Dome” missile defense shield, whose

success will demand continued innovation in space-based assets. We're going back to the moon, and God-willing, we'll be the first country to plant our flag on Mars.

I look forward to the testimonies from our witnesses today as we seek to retain U.S. space superiority in the 21st century.