
Why Space (and Space Policy) Is Important to America



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The United States is critically reliant on space capabilities for its economic prosperity and national security. Space capabilities play a significant and growing role in improving the daily lives of Americans and form part of the critical infrastructure of our society. For example, civilian use of the Global Positioning System, which is provided by a constellation of U.S. military satellites 12,000 miles above the Earth, has become a ubiquitous component of daily life. Other government and commercial satellites feed critical data into weather forecasts and models, helping scientists provide improved warnings of severe weather and its impact on communities. Commercial and government satellites serve as critical links in the global telecommunications network, particularly for connecting remote and isolated communities and our military overseas. Space systems underpin and reinforce many of America's national security capabilities and provide the United States and its allies unprecedented advantages in national decision-making, military operations, and homeland security. The United States' freedom to operate in and use space is, therefore a vital national interest.

Since the early 2000s, the global space economy has been growing at a significant rate, driven by increasing private sector involvement in space activities. This growth is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. At the same time, the space domain is also becoming more congested and contested as more countries and other space actors enter this domain. As the world's leading space power, with more civilian and military space assets in orbit than any other country, the United States also plays a central role in shaping the development of norms and rules for safe and peaceful activities in

outer space. If space is to remain a domain free for peaceful exploration and use, the United States must play its leading role, not only in the development and application of space capabilities; additionally, it must do so in the development of policy and regulations to shape the development of the global space arena, thereby preserving the stability and security of space for all.



The United States' space successes and their continuing benefits are the result of prescient space policy decisions by a series of U.S. presidential administrations. Those space policy decisions have provided tangible societal benefits that improve the daily lives of millions of American citizens. While nearly every U.S. presidential administration since Eisenhower has issued national space policies, the first Trump administration brought renewed focus and public visibility to space policy.

Many of the first Trump administration's space policy decisions continued long-standing principles and goals that have persisted across multiple administrations, both Republican and Democrat, because they reflect core American values and national interests. First and foremost among these interests is sustained U.S. international leadership to ensure the long-term sustainability, safety, and security of the space domain. This is not done out of pure altruism, but to ensure that the United States can continue to benefit from the use of space over the long term.

The second Trump administration, working together with Congress, federal agencies, and other stakeholders, has the opportunity to continue to place a high priority on space policy and reinforce national space policy decisions that reflect long-standing U.S. principles, which inspire and unify the American public. At the same time, unresolved challenges and problems await the administration. This briefing book serves as a quick, handy, and concise guide to identifying and understanding major space policy issues and guidance on how to meet their challenges. ●

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