



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON **SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Valerie Foushee (D-NC)

Space Subcommittee Hearing:

*Strategic Trajectories:
Assessing China's Space Rise and the Risks to U.S. Leadership*

December 4th, 2025

Good morning and thank you Chairman Haridopolos for holding today's hearing to review China's space activities and the implications for the United States space program. I want to also welcome our distinguished witnesses. Thank you for being here.

It is no surprise that we are here today to assess China's space rise and the risks to U.S. leadership. China's ascending space capabilities are fast approaching strategic comparability with the United States. This is intentional.

Xi Jinping's "Space Dream" stresses the importance of China dominating the space domain. The recently released 2025 annual report to Congress of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission states that "China has embarked on a whole-of-government strategy to become the world's preeminent space power."

These are not mere projections or rhetoric. China is methodically carrying out increasingly sophisticated space capabilities in its effort to dominate. China has joined the ranks of only the U.S. and Russia in launching humans into space. To date, China has become only the second nation to land and operate a spacecraft on Mars. In addition, China operates a continuously crewed space station in low Earth orbit and has racked up a number of "firsts:"

Including landing on—and collecting and returning samples from—the far side of the Moon; emplacing communications satellites around the Moon, and more.










That is not all. China has publicly announced its plans to land humans on the surface of the Moon by 2030, establish a permanent international lunar research station by 2035, and acquire samples from Mars and return them to Earth in the early 2030s.

In 2024, China released its first Mid-and Long-Term Plan for Space Science in which it aims to achieve "top-tier international ranking" in major space science areas by 2050. Further, China is aggressively investing in and enabling a quasi-commercial space sector as well as growing its international partnerships.

Why does it matter? The People's Republic of China, for which there is no distinction between civil and military space, knows that leadership in space has brought the United States invaluable geopolitical soft

power, significant and beneficial international alliances, economic growth fueled by innovation, bold and inspiring missions that drive and attract STEM talent, and national security advantages. How we navigate China's ascending space capabilities today has direct impacts on every American. Our banking, communications, weather prediction, agriculture, natural resource management, and national security, for example, all rely on space systems. Threats to the U.S.'s presence and leadership in space could put at risk a critical backbone of our social, security, and economic systems.

And how are we navigating China's space rise? The Trump Administration appears to believe that attacking research universities, gutting our Federal STEM workforce, withdrawing from international engagement, and significantly underinvesting in research and development is the answer. Just look at this stark comparison between China's space science plans and those of the Trump Administration, as prepared by the Planetary Society.

| China advances its space science efforts as America considers retreat | | | As China moves forward with an ambitious slate of missions, the U.S. weighs deep cuts to NASA's science portfolio. | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|---------------|
| | | CHINA | | | UNITED STATES |
|  Earth's Magnetic Field | ✓ | Solar wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer. Launching in 2026. | ✗ | Magnetospheric Multiscale Mission Operational. Terminated in FY26 PBR. | |
|  Universe / Exoplanets | ✓ | Xuntian Space Telescope Launching in 2026. | ✓ | Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope Cut by 58% in FY26 PBR. Launching in 2027. | |
|  Asteroid Apophis | ✓ | Apophis Recon Swarm Proposed for 2027 launch. | ✗ | OSIRIS-Apophis Explorer Operational. Terminated in FY26 PBR. | |
|  Exoplanets | ✓ | Earth 2.0 Space Telescope Launching in 2028. | ✗ | Habitable Worlds Observatory Under study for 2030s. 90% cut in FY26 PBR. | |
|  Mars Sample Return | ✓ | Tianwen-3 Launching in 2028. | ✗ | Mars Sample Return In development. Canceled in FY26 PBR. | |
|  Jupiter | ✓ | Tianwen-4 Launching in 2029. | ✗ | Juno Operational. Terminated in FY26 PBR. | |
|  Gravitational Waves | ✓ | Taiji-2 Launching in 2030. | ✗ | Laser Interferometer Space Antenna ESA partnership. 2030s. Canceled in FY26 PBR. | |
|  Venus | ✓ | Venus Atmosphere Sample Return Proposed for 2033. | ✗ | DAVINCI and VERITAS In development. 2031. Canceled in FY26 PBR. | |
|  Ice Giant Planets | ✓ | Neptune-Triton Mission Under study for 2039. | ✗ | Uranus Flagship Mission Under study for 2030s. Canceled in FY26 PBR. | |

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THE PLANETARY SOCIETY

Image: Maxwell Zhu and Casey Dreier

While I'm pleased that the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope—on which both Duke and North Carolina Central University in my district collaborate—is maintained and making excellent progress, ceding so many transformational space science missions to China alone would send a dangerous message.

As Ranking Member of this Subcommittee, I have expressed before: I will not stand for handing the keys to lunar exploration—or space leadership—to China. This is a pivotal moment. We, on this Subcommittee and in the Science Committee, have a responsibility and an obligation to advance sound policies that ensure and sustain America's civil and global leadership in space.

We must meet this challenge with bold policies, robust investments, and a unified vision to preserve our nation's leadership in space exploration and innovation. We also need to critically navigate our co-existence with China in space. For example, are there areas where limited engagement with China, such as on spaceflight safety, could serve U.S. interests?

By strengthening our strategic focus, funding, and global partnerships, we can ensure that the United States remains the leader in space for decades to come.

I hope our witnesses will give us concrete recommendations on how to ensure U.S. leadership in the strategic competition with China, and what Congress should consider as we work to reauthorize NASA, not only on highly visible programs such as Artemis, low Earth orbit, and science — But also on the consequential roles of technical standards, regulatory policies, and international partnerships and diplomacy that have far-reaching influence for United States space activities and much more.

At this time, Mr. Chairman, I ask for Unanimous Consent to permit Representative Don Beyer, to attend this hearing and ask questions of the witnesses.

Thank you, and I yield back.