

OPENING STATEMENT  
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**of the Subcommittee on Space**

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
Subcommittee on Space  
*“Are we Losing the Space Race to China?”*  
September 27, 2016

Good morning, and welcome to our distinguished panel of witnesses. I want to thank Chairman Babin for calling this hearing.

On October 4, 1957, 59 years ago next week, the Soviet Union stunned the World when it launched Sputnik I into outer space. That launch, marking the first time a man-made satellite was placed into Earth orbit, caught Americans by surprise and sparked fears that the Soviet Union might also be capable of sending missiles with nuclear weapons from Russia to the United States. Not long after, Congress passed legislation establishing the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

The agency’s budding space program became important in America’s efforts to demonstrate U.S. preeminence and technological prowess over the Soviet Union. To that end, President John F. Kennedy stood before Congress on May 25, 1961 proposing that *“this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth”*.

Following a series of interim achievements that demonstrated NASA’s ability to dock and perform Extravehicular Activities in space, the space race ended with the successful July 20, 1969 Apollo 11 landing of the first humans on the Moon.

How different would today’s world be if NASA had not responded to President Kennedy’s challenge?

Now, almost 50 years since that historic event, some are asking if we are again in a space race, but this time with China.

Two weeks ago, China successfully placed in orbit its Tiangong-2 experimental orbiting space lab. And that accomplishment comes on the heels of China's landing a robotic rover on the Moon, with plans announced to do the same on Mars.

So, should we be concerned that China may be closing the gap in spaceflight capabilities?

Today's panel is well qualified to address this question. In particular, I look forward to hearing about China's pace of progress in exploring space and how *our* track record fares in comparison.

I would also like to know if the recent success of China's space program is due to its ability to stay on course.

In addition, I would like to get the witnesses views on what they believe the goals and objectives of the Chinese space program are and what impact other domestic priorities have on the conduct of their space activities.

So, I look forward to hearing the panel's views on whether the U.S. should seek greater cooperation with other space-faring nations, including China, and what challenges we face if we choose to do so.

Well, Mr. Chairman, we have a lot to discuss this morning, and I look forward to our witness' testimony.

Thank you, and I yield back the balance of my time.