

Evolving National Security Space Policies

Victoria Samson, Chief Director, Space Security and Stability

Secure World Foundation

McGill Strategic Space Law Course 2025

Oct. 17, 2025



**SECURE
WORLD
FOUNDATION**



About Secure World Foundation

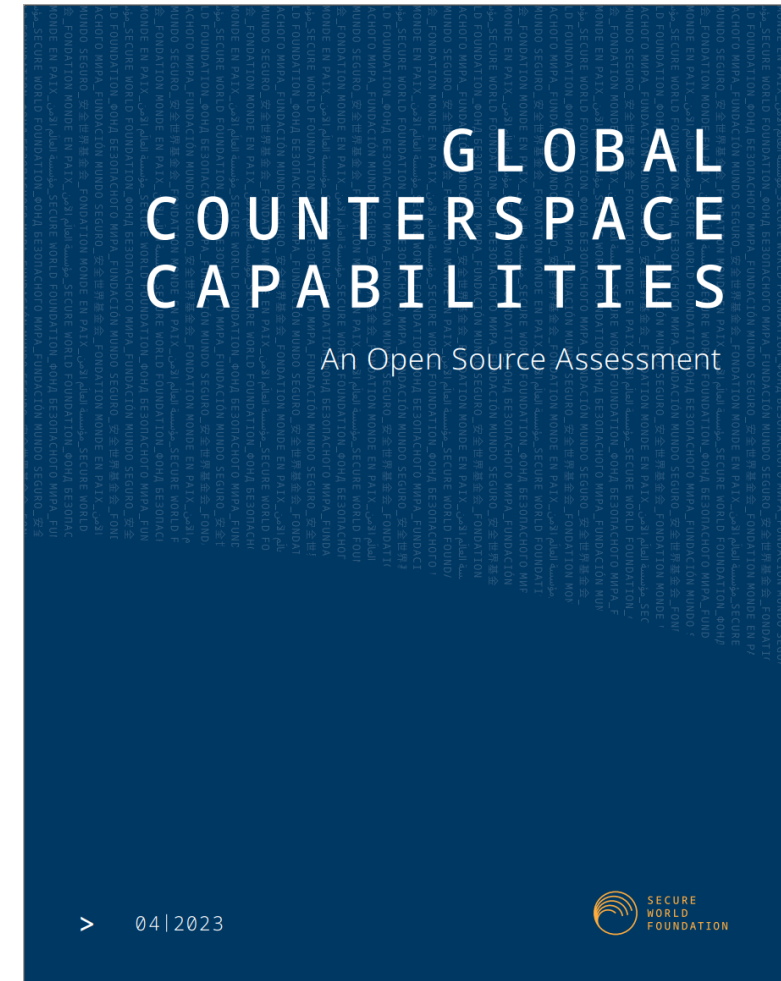
- **SWF** is a *private operating foundation* that promotes cooperative solutions for space sustainability.
- **Vision:** The secure, sustainable, and peaceful uses of outer space that contribute to global stability on Earth.
- **Our mission:** Work with governments, industry, international organizations, and civil society to develop and promote ideas and actions to achieve *the secure, sustainable, and peaceful uses of outer space* benefiting Earth and all its peoples.



National Space Security Documents and Approaches

Space Security Portal (<https://spacesecurityportal.org/>):
an interactive map of global space governance
landscape

SWF's Global Counterspace Capabilities: An Open Source Assessment: examines counterspace capabilities for a
dozen countries across five different categories, plus
space situational awareness capabilities, as well as
information about security space policies/strategies
(when available)



<https://swfound.org/counterspace>



United States

- Has had established policy and doctrine about counterspace capabilities for decades
- Presidential administrations since the 1960s have directed/authorized R&D, and in some cases, greenlit testing/operational deployment of counterspace systems
- Recently undertook major reorg of its military space capabilities as part of its renewed focus on space as a warfighting domain
 - Led to the reestablished of US Space Command (USSPACECOM) in August 2019 and the creation of the US Space Force (USSF) in December 2019
- April 2025: USSF releases its warfighting framework.
 - USSF CSO Saltzman: “It is the formative purpose of the Space Force to achieve space superiority — to ensure freedom of movement in space for our forces while denying the same to our adversaries”
 - Counterspace operations: orbital warfare, electromagnetic warfare, and cyberspace warfare
 - Guardians can conduct terrestrial strike, orbital strike, space link interdiction, active & passive space defense
 - “Responsible” counterspace roughly means not debris-creating



Russia

- Russia recently undertook a major reorg of its military space capabilities into a new organization that combines space, air defense, and missile defense capabilities
 - The combination of Air Force and Aerospace Defense Forces led to the creation of its Aerospace Forces in 2015
- Russian space activities are run by Roscosmos. Created in 1992 as the Federal Space Agency, it was dissolved in 2015 and its responsibilities transferred to the Roscosmos state corporation, which was also merged with the United Rocket and Space Corporation
 - In its current form, Roscosmos is responsible for Russian civil space activities as well as supervising companies manufacturing civil and military space, missile, and rocket hardware
- Russia's space strategy is defined by the Ministry of Defense
- The pillar of Russian outer space governance is [Law N 5663-1, Law of the Russian Federation on Space Activities](#), which undergoes modification via presidential amendments. The Executive Office of the President also issues decrees and provisions on space policy and activity



China

- China has an integrated civilian and military outer space programs
 - Civilian outer space authority is the [China National Space Administration \(CNSA\)](#), which is under the management of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. China's space activities and projects are guided by white papers functioning as Five Year Plans, the latest being [China's Space Program: A 2021 Perspective](#)
 - Reporting to the State Council, the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense regulates policy for military aerospace and technological industry development
- In 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping initiated a sweeping reorganization of the PLA
 - Led to the creation of the Strategic Support Force (SSF) as the fifth military service by merging existing space, cyber, and electronic warfare units under a new unified command that reported directly to the Central Military Commission
 - In April 2024, announced a restructuring so that SSF is gone and replaced by Information Support Force, which operates alongside Cyberspace Force, Aerospace Force, and Joint Logistics Support Force
 - Space has been designated a domain of military conflict



India

- Limited national space policy documents
 - Until recently, its Constitution (1950), Satellite Communications Policy (2000), and revised Remote Sensing Data Policy (2011) were the only national laws that specifically dealt with space
 - India released a National Space Policy in April 2023. It divides out responsibilities between ISRO, Indian National Space Promotion & Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), and the Department of Space
 - Indian government announced in Feb. 2024 that it was opening up its space sector to foreign direct investment
 - IN-SPACe released in May 2024 guidelines for regulating space activities
- Long had focused on space for national development; shifted after China's 2007 ASAT test
 - June 2010, India established an Integrated Space Cell, located in the Integrated Defense Headquarters, which is comprised of all three branches of India's armed forces
 - In September 2018, Prime Minister Modi announced that India would be creating a Defence Space Agency (DSA) that would coordinate the space assets of the three branches of the Indian armed forces and work on space protection policies for Indian space assets; it became operational late in 2019
 - Defence Space Research Organisation was created in June 2019



Australia

- Established Australian Defence Force space command in March 2022, reported to be working on both reversible/irreversible ways in which to disable enemy satellites
- Also released Defence Space Strategy in March 2022, which stated that the mission of Australian military forces in space were to shape the space domain, deter competitor actions, and respond as necessary to assure access to space capabilities
- Undertaking a space domain review which was to be completed in March 2023 -?
- 2024 – Concept SELENE as a space operations framework

France

- In September 2018, French Minister of Defense Florence Parly surprised some by openly calling out the Russians for using their Luch Olymp satellite to allegedly attempt to spy on France's Athena-Fidus satellite
- In July 2019, French President Emmanuel Macron announced that by September 1 of that year, France would be elevating the existing Joint Space Command within the French Air Force to be a full Space Command and renaming the French Air Force to be the Air and Space Force
- Also in July 2019, announced its Space Defense Strategy, whose goals were to increase and strengthen SSA for there to be better decision-making and to protect French and selected European space assets



Iran

- Iranian Space Agency was created in February 2004 under the Supreme Council of Space chaired by the Iranian president
- The IRGC announced in April 2020 the existence of its Aerospace Force's Space Command

Israel

- The Space and Satellite Administration was created within the Israeli Ministry of Defense in the 1980s, while the Israeli Space Agency was created in 1983 and operates within its Ministry of Science and Technology
- IDF announced in Feb. 2024 the launch of a Space Directorate Unit



Japan

- Japan historically defined peaceful uses of outer space to be non-military. However, in 2008, the Japanese Diet passed the Basic Space law that allowed space to be used for national security purposes so long as it would be defensive in nature
- Japan stood up its Space Domain Mission Unit (SDMU) in May 2020
- Japan intends to change the name of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force to the Japan Air and Space Self-Defense Force (by FY 2027)
- In June 2023, Japan released a new Space Security Initiative that outlined the strategy for responding to space threats over the next decade
- July 2025, its MoD released space domain defense guidelines

North Korea

- There is no clear doctrine for counterspace weapons in North Korea. Furthermore, there is an absence of discussion on counterspace weapons in North Korea state media



South Korea

- In 2013, the South Korean Air Force unveiled its “Space Odyssey 2050”, a three-part strategy that aims to build its own space capabilities by 2050 to protect South Korea’s military forces
- The ROK Air Force launched its Space Operations Center in September 2021, which is charged with creating and carrying out space policy, as well as working with other branches of the South Korean government on enhancing space capabilities
- Dec. 2022 – ROK Air Force created a Space Operations Squadron
- May 2024 – created Korean AeroSpace Administration (KASA)

United Kingdom

- The UK Space Command was formed in April 2021 to provide command and control of the UK’s space capabilities, oversight of the development thereof, and continue the United Kingdom’s participation in the Combined Space Operations initiative
- The United Kingdom released its national space strategy NSS in September 2021
- Its Defence Space Strategy was released in February 2022
- The United Kingdom released its keystone military doctrine publication on space, Space Power, in September 2022, which identifies four key space power roles: space domain awareness, space control, space support to operations, and space service support
- June 2025’s Strategic Defense Review called out space as a separate domain



Dual-Use versus Dual-Purpose

- **Dual-use:** space objects that have both military and civilian functions
 - Military and security, as well as civilian and commercial functions. Example: GPS
 - Can be carried out either simultaneously or alternatively
 - The integration of both functions are in one single object
- **Dual-purpose:** space objects that can be repurposed for aggressive objectives
 - Designed to fulfill a benign objective (like on-orbit servicing or active debris removal) but could be potentially repurposed to harm other space objects
 - Not designed to fulfill military functions directly, although they may provide some support to military satellites
- **Lexicon for Outer Space Security** (<https://unidir.org/publication/lexicon-outer-space-security>)
 - Intended to facilitate shared understandings of key topics and terms
 - Three types of terms:
 - Acronyms
 - Common definitions
 - Terminology frequently used in space security discussions that could benefit from further clarification



Case Study: No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space

- First proposed by Russia in 2004 and in subsequent annual UNGA resolutions
 - 33 countries have made this non-legally binding political commitment
 - China is not one of them, although it has voted for (and sponsored several of) the related UNGA resolutions
 - SWF has a tracking sheet that tracks the votes on and sponsors of UNGA resolutions for this from 2014 on: <https://www.swfound.org/publications-and-reports/multilateral-space-security-initiatives>
 - December 2024 UNGA Res. 79/20 (129–53–7): “Encourages all States, especially spacefaring nations, to consider the possibility of upholding, as appropriate, a political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space”
- Concern: how do you define a weapon? What about technology that is dual-purpose?
 - Also, the implication is that it is fine to be second to put weapons in space
 - Does Golden Dome render this moot?

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

7th SUMMIT for SPACE SUSTAINABILITY

OCTOBER 22-23, 2025

Centre de Conférences Pierre Mendès France
PARIS | FRANCE

More information at SWFsummit.org

#SWFsummit25

CO-HOSTED BY



SECURE
WORLD
FOUNDATION



GOVERNEMENT

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

Questions?

Thanks.

Victoria Samson,
vsamson@swfound.org



SECURE
WORLD
FOUNDATION