

**RECORD VERSION**

**STATEMENT BY**

**HONORABLE MARC J. BERKOWITZ ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR FOR  
SPACE POLICY**

**BEFORE THE**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES HOUSE**

**SECOND SESSION, 119TH CONGRESS**

**ON STRATEGIC POSTURE**

**MARCH 17, 2026**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Chairman DesJarlais, Ranking Member Moulton, and distinguished members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the Department of War's space and missile defense posture. It is an honor to appear with my colleagues, Assistant Secretary Robert Kadlec, Admiral Richard Correll, General Stephan Whiting, and General Gregory Guillot.

The United States is facing intensifying strategic competition in the security environment. Competitors have fielded and operate sophisticated space, counterspace, missile, and integrated air and missile defense (IAMD) systems. They view space as a warfighting domain and seek the ability to deny us freedom of access to and use of the domain, jeopardize our military forces, and hold our Homeland at risk.

The pace and scale of the threat is unprecedented. Consequently, fielding and operating the space and missile defense forces necessary to ensure U.S. freedom of action in space, deny adversaries its hostile use, and defend the Homeland and our military forces is a strategic imperative. The Department is therefore focusing investment on maintaining our technological edge and operating modern systems that enhance the capability and survivability of our forces.

Outer space is an increasingly complex and contested warfighting domain. Adversaries are employing space systems for command and control, targeting, and

precision strike while simultaneously developing and operating a variety of space control capabilities—from cyber and electronic warfare to kinetic anti-satellite (ASAT) missiles and orbital weapons—to counter U.S. advantages.

Concurrently, rivals are expanding their arsenals of ballistic, hypersonic, and advanced cruise missiles, and other advanced aerial threats. They are integrating offensive strike capabilities and IAMD systems into joint operations to strengthen their ability to deny access and impose costs. The risk is compounded by the prospect of simultaneous conflicts, where adversaries could act in coordination or opportunistically across multiple theaters.

China is our pacing competitor. Its military modernization is rapid and comprehensive, spanning space, counterspace, cyber, nuclear, and conventional strike capabilities. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) sees space as vital for future conflicts, essential for denying our ability to sense and communicate, targeting U.S. forces, and enabling long-range strikes. China's satellite constellations have expanded significantly, and their networked systems are designed to track and engage our mobile forces in the Indo-Pacific region. It is fielding a broad range of kinetic and non-kinetic space control weapons to hold U.S. space assets at risk.

Furthermore, China is expanding its nuclear and missile forces, developing new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with nuclear and conventional payloads, hypersonic glide vehicles, and other advanced systems that can threaten the U.S. Homeland from multiple vectors. This offensive buildup is paired with a sophisticated, layered IAMD system to protect critical targets. The PLA is diligently applying lessons from modern conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine, to improve its warfighting concepts.

Russia possesses significant space, counterspace, missile, and IAMD capabilities. Russia's space program has faced setbacks, but it continues to invest in an array of weapons designed to counter space capabilities. This includes cyber and electronic warfare against satellite systems as seen in Ukraine. Russia's primary strategic threat remains its large and diverse nuclear arsenal which is central to its military strategy. Russia's use of advanced conventional missiles in Ukraine provides a real-world testbed for its capabilities.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses a direct and growing threat to our Homeland, forces, and allies with its expanding nuclear missile and electromagnetic warfare capabilities. Its arsenal of theater-range missiles holds U.S., South Korean, and Japanese territory at risk, and its ICBMs are capable of striking America.

Iran's development and proliferation of missiles and unmanned aerial systems to its proxies and state actors like Russia underscore its threat to regional stability. Its air and missile attacks against U.S. forces, allies, and partners demonstrate this threat. The decisive military actions conducted under President Trump through Operations MIDNIGHT HAMMER and EPIC FURY are necessary to address the threat from Iran's nuclear ambitions and its malign activities.

As articulated in the 2025 National Security Strategy, our approach is to restore American strength to secure peace. The President directed the Department to secure our vital interests by ensuring American space superiority as well as defend the Homeland with the Golden Dome for America (GDA). The 2026 National Defense Strategy (NDS) builds on this principle, prioritizing a commonsense, America-First approach to peace through strength. Space and missile defense forces are central to U.S. strategy.

The Department's highest priority, as directed by the President and the NDS, is the defense of the U.S. Homeland. Access to and use of space is a vital national interest because of its overriding importance to our security and economic prosperity. U.S. space systems enable nuclear deterrence. They enhance domain awareness, including access to denied and hostile territory, and provide strategic and tactical indications and warning, launch detection, nuclear detonation detection, attack assessment, and nuclear command, control, and communications.

Consistent with the President's direction to ensure space superiority, the Department is focused on normalizing space as a warfighting domain. Space systems contribute to all elements of America's national power. We will secure and defend our interests to, in, and from space.

The President's GDA initiative is the cornerstone of our Homeland defense posture. It is an essential and pragmatic response to the growing threat posed by ballistic, hypersonic, advanced cruise missile and other next-generation aerial weapons. Combined with the prospect of U.S. retaliation, GDA will strengthen deterrence by denying adversaries the ability to achieve their objectives through coercion or aggression. Our competitors have been modernizing their offensive and defensive forces for years. A comprehensive Homeland missile defense will contribute to deterrence by protecting our nation, citizens, critical infrastructure, and retaliatory capabilities against the most catastrophic threats while reducing the utility of opponents' air and missile arsenals as well as an incentive for an adversary to strike first in a crisis or escalate during a conflict.

At present, our Homeland missile defense is limited, and its effectiveness is eroding against increasingly advanced threats. It offers no defense against hypersonic weapons, advanced cruise missiles, or major ballistic missile attacks. GDA aims to rectify this by creating a comprehensive, layered defense-in-depth of the United States. It will perform multiple missions including ballistic missile

defense, hypersonic missile defense, and cruise missile defense. GDA will leverage both existing technologies and next-generation systems such as space-based sensors and interceptors. It will integrate sensors and effectors across multiple domains, managed by an artificial intelligence-enabled battle management and command and control system. By providing multiple engagement opportunities across a wider range of threats, GDA will be more effective than our current limited system. The cost of GDA, while significant, is a necessary investment to protect assets of incalculable value—the lives of our citizens and the territorial integrity of our nation. The cost of failing to defend the Homeland would be infinitely greater.

In the Indo-Pacific region, a denial defense along the First Island Chain is critical. Space capabilities are essential to this effort, enabling the intelligence, command and control, and other warfighting functions needed to project power effectively across the vast distances of the region. U.S. Space Command and U.S. Space Forces-Indo-Pacific are integrating space capabilities into joint and combined operations to maintain a credible deterrent. Our regional missile defense posture, centered on Aegis destroyers, as well as Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) and Patriot systems, provides a forward-deployed, layered network to defend our forces and allies.

Our global alliances will remain a strategic advantage if our allies and partners invest properly in defense. We require capable allies with the military strength and political will to take primary responsibility for their own regional security. This allows the United States to focus its finite resources on the most pressing challenges.

The Department is pursuing robust space and missile defense cooperation with key allies and partners. We have agreements in place with numerous countries for a variety of such cooperative activities. In addition, the Combined Space Operations initiative and Multi-National Force Operation OLYMPIC DEFENDER enable the protection of common U.S. and allied interests in space. The Department also has agreements with numerous countries for missile defense. We are working with allies and partners across the world to transform disparate IAMD systems into cohesive regional defense networks.

The final pillar of the NDS is supercharging our Defense Industrial Base. To maintain our military edge, we must move faster than our rivals. This requires cutting bureaucratic red tape, empowering program leaders to take risks, and embracing a "commercial-first" mindset where appropriate to leverage private sector innovation. We must accelerate the development, acquisition, and fielding of critical space and missile defense capabilities at scale.

Our investments in space and missile defense are aligned with these strategic priorities. These investment priorities are focused on resilient satellite control, advanced tracking of aerial threats, secure data networks, space domain surveillance, and modernizing command and control to operate at the speed of conflict. We are also acquiring the necessary warfighting capabilities to protect and defend U.S. interests in space.

We are building GDA to provide a comprehensive, layered, and defense-in-depth of the United States. Key investments include the Next Generation Interceptor; the Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor; the Glide Phase Interceptor, and Space-Based Interceptors.

We are also expanding and enhancing regional missile defenses by delivering additional THAAD batteries, significantly increasing production of PAC-3 interceptors, expanding inventories of other key interceptors, and continuing development of a comprehensive IAMD system for Guam.

In closing, the Department of War is posturing its space and missile defense forces to achieve peace through strength. With the continued support of Congress, we will field the modern space and missile defense forces required to deter aggression, defend the Homeland, and protect U.S. national interests.