



Opening Statement of Chairman Brian Babin

Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee Hearing
Strategic Trajectories: Assessing China's Space Rise and Risks to U.S. Leadership
December 4, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding today's hearing on this critical topic.

A central priority of my service in Congress has been to strengthen U.S. competitiveness in research and development, science, and technology. As Chairman of this committee, I have consistently emphasized the importance of this goal, focusing not only on ensuring the United States maintains its position as a global leader on Earth but also in space.

To achieve this, we must acknowledge the growing challenges posed by the Chinese Communist Party.

The CCP has made no secret about its ambition to emerge as the world's foremost leader in space exploration and innovation. Since the election of President Xi in 2013, the CCP has deepened the connection between its space program and its broader national goals of domestic and military modernization.

This increased focus has led to greater attention and resources for its space program, resulting in several recent accomplishments that cannot be overlooked.

China has maintained a crewed presence in low Earth orbit since 2021, using its *Tiangong* space station.

In 2024, China became the first and only nation to return samples from the far side of the Moon.

This year, China conducted a series of tests to develop major components and systems that will support its future lunar missions, demonstrating that the CCP is both committed and working expeditiously toward its goal of landing taikonauts on the Moon by 2030.

The U.S. cannot afford to fall behind. If China takes the lead in space exploration, it will set the rules of the road. Our values – not those of the Chinese Communist Party – must shape those rules.

To ensure that the United States retains its leading role in space, Congress must understand China's capabilities, its future plans, and the pace at which the CCP is completing its objectives. That is the purpose of today's hearing.

A clearer understanding of China's space program will guide this committee's work on space policy for the remainder of this Congress.

I was in the Oval Office when President Trump signed the last full NASA authorization bill into law in March 2017. It was a crucial step in the right direction, but much has happened in the years since.

In the coming weeks, our committee will consider a new NASA authorization bill that will provide urgently needed direction to the agency. I look forward to working with my colleagues to send this bill to the President's desk.

However, China's achievements extend beyond its government space activities. A report by the Commercial Space Federation, released in September, highlights significant growth in China's investment in its commercial space industry.

America's commercial space sector is the envy of the world, but maintaining that status is not guaranteed, and our leadership is far from assured. Next year, our committee will consider new commercial space legislation that builds on the Commercial Space Act of 2023, which I was proud to lead.

As I said during our commercial space hearing last September, we can either be tethered to Earth by red tape while the Chinese move ahead – or we can act decisively. This bill will help ensure the continued growth of our commercial space sector.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, but with Congress, stakeholders, and the administration working together, we can keep America at the helm as we enter the next era of space exploration.

I am pleased to welcome today's excellent panel of witnesses. Several of you are no strangers to this committee. I look forward to your testimony and the opportunity to engage with you this morning.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.