

security and embraced the objective of maximizing U.S. military space dominance for unilateral strategic advantage.²

Today, post-Cold War optimism about increased international cooperation on commercial and civilian uses of space has been dampened and displaced by the prevailing concern that a potential enemy might be able to use space in hostile ways. This concern has caused a number of countries to increase their space-related military capabilities and to undertake actions that others find potentially threatening. In turn, the United States has used some of these actions, such as China's 2007 test of an anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon, as evidence of near-term threats that require a redoubled effort to acquire full-spectrum space dominance, which other countries predictably resist. Diplomatic efforts to control this dangerous dynamic through traditional Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS)-style negotiations have stalled, and attempts to enact voluntary codes of conduct have had marginal results.

The situation has deteriorated to the point where urgent action is needed to advance three basic, inter-related goals for space security. Since no country has ever used space-based weapons against terrestrial targets or ballistic missiles, nor physically attacked another country's satellite, it is vitally important to preserve these valuable thresholds as the capabilities and short-term incentives for attacking space assets increase. A secondary objective is to prevent a reoccurrence of ASAT tests or other actions that cause disproportionate damage to the space environment, increasing long-lasting space debris and raising other inadvertent risks for fellow space users. A third objective underscored by the February 2009 collision between an Iridium satellite and a defunct Russian satellite is to better coordinate operations and combine resources for a safer, more sustainable expansion of state and non-state space activities.

New political leadership in Washington has opened a window of opportunity for diplomatic initiatives to enhance both the military and the environmental dimensions of space security. As a candidate, Barack Obama pledged to take a more cooperative approach to protecting space assets from disruption, preventing the weaponization of space, minimizing space debris, and enhancing space situational awareness.³ His administration is conducting a space policy review in hopes of releasing a revised National Space Policy by mid-2010.⁴ Yet, many of the review's major players are either holdovers from the Bush

² For an unclassified summary of the Bush administration's National Space Policy, released October 6, 2006, see <http://www.ostp.gov/galleries/default-file/Unclassified%20National%20Space%20Policy%20--%20FINAL.pdf>. For a skeptical assessment of US efforts to achieve military space dominance, see Nancy Gallagher and John D. Steinbruner, *Reconsidering the Rules for Space Security*, American Academy of Arts and Sciences Occasional Paper (2008), at: <http://www.amacad.org/publications/reconsidering.aspx>.

³ "Advancing the Frontiers of Space Exploration," August 2008 position paper at BarackObama.com. Shortly after President Obama took office, new policy guidelines on the White House website included language intended to summarize his campaign positions, including a commitment to seek a ban on weapons that "interfere with military and commercial satellites."

⁴ The initial space policy review is due October 1, 2009 and a Congressionally mandated Space Posture Review is due to Congress by December 1, 2009. See Amy Klamper, "President Orders Sweeping U.S. Space Policy Review," *Space News* (July 2, 2009).