The Emerging Chinese Space Program and NASA's Strategic Direction

Presentation for The National Academies

Committee on NASA's Strategic Direction

Dr. Gregory Kulacki
Union of Concerned Scientists

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China and NASA's Strategic Direction

China has been a follower not a leader.

China's objective has been to avoid falling too far behind, not to equal or overtake leading space-faring nations.

Chinese investments in space, authorized in 1986, focused on goals similar to six objectives in 2011 NASA Strategic Plan.
China and NASA's Strategic Direction

China has never approved plans or funding for a human lunar mission.

China's has only recently initiated feasibility studies for a future human lunar mission.

Chinese policy-making process suggests thousands of experts and scores of institutions will be involved in a lengthy debate before approving a human lunar program.
Chinese space community is not hostile to the United States, despite antagonistic U.S. behavior and policy.

Chinese political leadership strongly prefers international cooperation, though space leadership is inclined to oppose cooperation with the United States.
Chinese space policy is *not* determined by, dominated by, or controlled by the Chinese military.

General Armaments Department of the PLA serves an administrative, not an executive function in Chinese space organizational hierarchy.

Most project funding is determined by standing committee composed of scientists and engineers.
China and NASA's Strategic Direction

Current U.S. policy towards cooperation with China is uniformed, misguided and counterproductive.

Discussion should begin with influential, retired Chinese space scientists and engineers, **not** bureaucrats.

Cooperation and exchanges should place heavy emphasis on education and public relations.
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