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Sustaining U.S. National Security Space Leadership

Considerations for the Biden Administration

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The National Security Space Association is a 501(c)(3) (pending) non-profit support association solely dedicated to the National Security Space enterprise. NSSA works to foster long-term cooperation among industry and government, leading the way with expert opinion, insight and analysis. The Association is devoted to fostering a holistic, mission-oriented workforce that will shape the face of National Security Space for generations to come.

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The United States is the world's leader in the exploration and use of outer space. America's preeminent position in space has provided strategic advantages envied around the world. Since the beginning of the space age, the U.S. has leveraged those advantages to protect and advance U.S. interests and values, defend our nation against foreign threats, enhance public safety, and gain knowledge about our universe and the planet we live on. Space inspires generations of young and diverse scientists, technologists, mathematicians, and engineers. It creates opportunities for commerce and trade, supports the expansion of human prosperity, and underpins the alliances that maintain international order.

Yet such a preeminence is not a birthright. U.S. leadership in space is now in jeopardy. Nowhere is this contest more clearly understood than in the emergence of threats to our national security interests in space. Rival nations recognize America's political, economic, and military advantages in space and the vulnerability of our space assets and operations, and view space as a warfighting domain within which to coerce the U.S. with the threat or use of armed force.

In the coming decade, the U.S. will face as great a challenge to its leadership in space as at any time since the launch of Sputnik. The outcome is far from certain. The last 20 years have seen the gap between the U.S. and other nations, especially China, erode dramatically. Unless that trajectory changes, U.S. leadership, and the significant national security and economic benefits that derive from it, may be in jeopardy. To that end, the National Security Space Association (NSSA) offers the following four recommendations for consideration by the incoming Biden Administration.

1. ***Maintain Executive Office of the President attention to U.S. space policy and strategy.*** The Biden administration should take steps to assure sustained high-level attention to national space matters, including maintaining a forum within the Executive Office of the President to formulate, coordinate, synchronize, and integrate policy and strategy for a comprehensive whole of government and whole of nation approach to protect and advance U.S. interests in space. Strong and sustained White House leadership is needed to assure America's preeminence in national security, civil, and commercial space activities. NSSA strongly encourages the Biden administration to retain the National Space Council as the mechanism to deliberate on national space matters and oversee the implementation of U.S. space policy and strategy.
2. ***Assert U.S. leadership to shape the space domain, promote the peaceful uses of space, and sustain the space environment for the benefit of all humankind.*** As part of a comprehensive and integrated national space strategy, the Biden administration should establish a leadership position in international deliberations of legal and regulatory matters affecting space activities to promote the peaceful uses of space,

especially safe and sustainable on-orbit behavior, and assure a favorable investment climate for private sector space activities. Moreover, to unlock the value and promise of space activities as well as secure their long-term economic and security benefits, NSSA strongly encourages the Biden administration to enhance space cooperation among the U.S. space sectors as well as with allies and international partners.

3. ***Enhance the industrial and technology bases required to sustain U.S. leadership in space.*** As part of its plans for economic recovery and to “Build Back Better”, the Biden administration should continue and enhance efforts to incentivize the private sector to invest in, innovate, and invent advanced space capabilities. The past 10 years have seen an explosion of interest and innovation in space systems, technologies, and services. Entrepreneurship is on the rise. These initiatives range from innovation centers at established production and integration companies to new space entrepreneurs who have created an ecosystem of innovation. These initiatives will create high quality jobs, inspire interest in science, technology, math, and engineering, while benefiting the economy, trade, and national security. NSSA strongly encourages the Biden administration to partner with the private sector to enhance the space industrial and technology bases to sustain U.S. leadership in space, increase economic prosperity, and protect national security.

4. ***Finalize implementing changes to U.S. national security space management and organization.*** Historic changes to the management structure of the U.S. defense and intelligence space program, including creation of the U.S. Space Force as an independent armed service and reestablishment of U.S. Space Command as a Unified Combatant Command, are well underway on the basis of bipartisan action. The ongoing reorganization addresses longstanding concerns by successive administrations and Congresses regarding national security space leadership, management, and stewardship. NSSA strongly encourages the Biden administration to finalize their implementation to adapt the national security space enterprise to today’s security environment and ensure the U.S. is prepared to address the challenge posed by foreign powers deploying and operating space and weapons systems that threaten the freedom of space, jeopardize U.S. military forces, and put the U.S. homeland at risk.

For additional information, please contact:

Chris Williams, Chair, NSSA Studies and Analysis Center (Chris.Williams@nssaspace.org), or

Steve Jacques, NSSA Executive Director (Steve.Jacques@nssaspace.org)