



FACT SHEET: DoD Strategy for Deterrence in Space

Hostile acts in space take place in a broader, geopolitical context. Those acts are undertaken to achieve some effect on earth, whether it be obtaining an operational advantage in another domain or obtaining a desired political or social effect. Deterrence in space is important, but it is only a subset of broader U.S. deterrence efforts. The space element of deterrence must bolster the overarching U.S. deterrence posture, while ensuring an ability to operate through a degraded environment and win those conflicts, should deterrence fail.

As noted in the National Security Space Strategy, the DoD has a four layered approach to deterring attacks on space capabilities:

1) Support the development of international norms of responsible behavior that enhance safety, security, and stability in space.

A broadly-accepted set of international norms of responsible behavior will have positive effects on the safety, stability and sustainability of the space domain. They can also have a positive effect on deterrence; even if potential adversaries are not deterred from conducting hostile or malicious acts in space, norms can help the international community identify and isolate aggressors. In this way, norms of responsible behavior can complicate a potential aggressor's decision-making processes and provide the basis for an international response.

2) Build coalitions to enhance collective security capabilities.

Coalitions deny a potential aggressor the opportunity to fight one-on-one. Instead, the aggressor must attack assets and forces of multiple countries, which expands the scope of a conflict and reduces the odds that a potential aggressor can achieve their desired outcome at an acceptable cost. In addition, a coalition brings more capability, capacity, and credibility to the fight in the event that deterrence fails.

3) Deny the benefit of aggression by enhancing the resilience of space architectures and ensuring that the Joint Force can operate effectively when space capabilities are degraded.

Enhancing the resilience of space architectures reduces the likelihood that an adversary can degrade the capabilities of U.S. and allied forces sufficiently to achieve their tactical and operational objectives. As with operating in coalition, improving resilience has significant benefits in terms of operating in a degraded environment, should deterrence fail. To complicate an adversary's decision-making, the U.S. will demonstrate an ability to operate effectively in a degraded space environment.

4) Be prepared to respond to an attack on U.S. or allied space systems proportionally, but not necessarily symmetrically and not necessarily in space, using any or all elements of national power.

Should deterrence fail, the U.S. will be in a position to respond in self-defense and defeat such aggression. Such a response will include proportional, but possibly asymmetrical responses, using any or all elements of national power. They may not be limited to the space domain, but rather will occur at the time and place of our choosing.

Taken together, these four layers enhance deterrence by complicating an adversary's decisionmaking, while assuring the Joint Force's ability to operate should deterrence fail.