

September 2006

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST ISSUE

Roger G. Harrison
Roger.g.harrison@edu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/spaceanddefense>



Part of the Asian Studies Commons, Aviation and Space Education Commons, Defense and Security Studies Commons, Eastern European Studies Commons, International Relations Commons, Leadership Studies Commons, Near and Middle Eastern Studies Commons, Nuclear Engineering Commons, Science and Technology Studies Commons, and the Space Vehicles Commons

Please take our feedback survey at: https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE

Recommended Citation

Harrison, Roger G. (2006) "INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST ISSUE," *Space and Defense*: Vol. 1: No. 0, Article 3.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/spaceanddefense/vol1/iss0/3>

This Response or Comment is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Space and Defense by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST ISSUE

Ambassador Roger G. Harrison, Ph.D.

Ambassador Roger G. Harrison is Director of the Center for Space and Defense Studies

This journal has come into existence to provide a forum for discussion of an intellectual and policy foundation for U.S. activities in space. It is open to all legitimate points of view and to contributions from policy makers, operators, academics, and the private sector. Although the Center for Space and Defense Policy is located at the Air Force Academy, no preference will be given in these pages to the Air Force's position on space policy. We are not advocates but academics, and conceive our contribution as providing Air Force and government leaders with situational awareness about thinking in other sectors of the space community, as well as in other spacefaring nations.

There have been three great visions of America's role in space and each can be associated with the President who emphasized that vision: Eisenhower's conception of peaceful uses of space that focused on the collection of intelligence data, Kennedy's call to manned space exploration, and Reagan's reconceptualization of the strategic role of space known as the Strategic Defense Initiative. All were products, to some degree, of the competition of the Cold War. All served as organizing principles that rallied public support on the one hand, and rationalized government space programs on the other. And all were honed during long periods of intellectual incubation in free and open discussions like those this journal is intended to propagate.

But it has been twenty-three years since Reagan espoused his vision and since then the Cold War ended, new spacefaring actors have emerged, and both the geopolitical importance of space and the

number of actors increasingly reliant upon it have expanded many fold. Technology now makes possible activities that were difficult to imagine in 1983, although perhaps not yet the impenetrable anti-ballistic missile shield that President Reagan foresaw. Despite these changes – or, perhaps, because of them – no vision of space future has arisen to give coherence to our space activities, and to rally the sort of public support needed for the multi-year funding such activities require.

There are, of course, *some* areas of general agreement. All agree that circumterrestrial space is becoming more crowded, and that this trend will likely accelerate. All agree that in some areas – and particularly in communications, positioning, navigation and timing, and intelligence gathering – space provides considerable comparative advantages. All agree that space is a potential arena for military competition, and that such competition – if it occurs – will be extraordinarily expensive. And most would agree that the days of practically unlimited resources for space are over, that private investment will now be more selective, and that future government space programs will be competing for pieces of a budgetary pie which is unlikely to grow and might very well shrink.

But there are also areas of broad disagreement, or perhaps lack of clarity. For example, although there remains broad public support for the notion of manned space flight, the sort of enthusiasm which once made possible the extraordinary financial and technological effort to land a man on the Moon is no longer as much in evidence. Nor has the President's *Vision for Space*

Exploration been comprehensively integrated into a wider vision of the U.S. role in space, and without such context, it may well prove more difficult to build and sustain public support.

By the same token, while there is an emphasis in U.S. national space policy on maintaining freedom of action in space, there is no consensus on what that aspiration implies, or what – in

there is an emphasis in U.S. national space policy on freedom of action but no consensus on what that implies

terms either of hardware or policy – will be necessary to achieve it. Some see a forceful assertion of U.S. military power in space as necessary, some think it unavoidable, while others view it as counterproductive.

Finally, while most agree – with greater or lesser enthusiasm – that some regime of regulation will be necessary in space beyond the rudimentary ones that now exist, there is disagreement on whether the United States should retain a special status within this regime, especially in the military sector. Some argue that our insistence on maintaining freedom of action in the military realm dooms the possibility of imposing order on the competition of spacefaring nations; others contend that no such order is possible without the enforcement of law that only the United States – with freedom to act as it deems necessary – can guarantee.

It is not the business of journals but of national leaders to rally the nation for the challenge of space, to set priorities and to settle bureaucratic disagreements. Indeed, if America succeeds in establishing an intellectual vision for the next stage of its activities in space, it will doubtless be a product of a President's vision and persistence, as our last three concerted efforts in space have been. The foundation for taking the next steps in space will be improved by vetting these steps through the process of open and honest

intellectual debate. Fostering that debate is the mission the Center for Space and Defense Studies, through its textbook, this journal, and its other activities, has set for itself.

