

For Immediate Release
Contact: Dan Scandling
May 11, 2011
Joe McNulty

(202) 225-5136

**WOLF STATEMENT AT U.S. - CHINA COMMISSION HEARING
ON MILITARY AND CIVIL SPACE PROGRAMS IN CHINA**

Says U.S. 'Has No Business' Helping China Develop Its Space Program

Washington, D.C. – Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA), chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee that oversees the budgets of NASA, the National Science Foundation and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, today delivered the following remarks at a U.S. - China Economic and Security Review Commission hearing on the implications of China's military and civil space programs:

“I appreciate the commission's leadership and I strongly support its work in this area. I believe that this review of the Chinese space program is both necessary and long overdue.

“Before I start, I want to express my sincere disappointment that NASA has chosen not to participate in this important hearing. As the agency responsible for our nation's civil space program, NASA has a unique responsibility to lead in this area and to ensure that the American space program remains preeminent. NASA's absence is reflective of this administration's abysmal record on American leadership in space.

“Last year, Congress wisely repudiated an administration proposal to take a ‘time out’ from NASA's Exploration program. Fortunately, Congress rebuked this proposal in the 2010 NASA Authorization Act and has provided funding for a robust Exploration program beyond Low Earth Orbit.

“Space is the ultimate ‘high ground’ that has provided the U.S. with countless security and economic advantages over the last 40 years. As the victor of the Cold War ‘space race’ with the Soviet Union, the U.S. has held an enormous advantage in space technology, defense capabilities, and advanced sciences.

“Our space program has been the envy of the world. Federal investments in NASA have generated entirely new sectors of our economy, creating hundreds of thousands of private sector jobs for Americans.

“It should not be surprising that many countries have taken notice of the tremendous benefits that the American space program has yielded. It is clear that we are now entering an era of much greater civil, defense and commercial competition in space.

“Most countries expanding their space programs are strong U.S. allies that are primarily interested in advancing science research or building a commercial space industry. The Chinese, however, do not fall into this category. Over the last decade, China has developed its space program at a surprising pace. In less than 10 years the Chinese have gone from launching their first manned spacecraft to unveiling plans last week for an advanced Chinese space station designed to rival the International Space Station.

“However, the Chinese are not only focusing on establishing a significant presence in Low Earth Orbit. In March, the Chinese state news agency announced its plans for ‘a powerful carrier rocket for making a manned moon landing and exploring deep space.’ This announcement confirms what space experts have long believed: the Chinese have their sights set on the pinnacle of American achievement – landing a man on the moon.

“According to the article, the Chinese are planning a heavy lift rocket capable of carrying up to 130 tons. This would provide the capacity to launch the critical components for a lunar landing. The announcement made clear that if the United States does not get serious about its own Exploration Program, the next flag planted on the moon may be a Chinese flag.

“What concerns me most about the Chinese space program is that unlike the U.S., it is being led by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). There is no reason to believe that the PLA’s space program will be any more benign than the PLA’s recent military posture.

“For example, according to the Congressional Research Service, ‘on March 9, 2009, the Pentagon reported that PRC ships and aircraft operating in the South China Sea had been acting in increasingly aggressive ways toward two U.S. Navy ocean surveillance ships operating in the area...’

“China is taking a more assertive posture globally, and their interests rarely intersect with ours. Consider the 2008 Senate testimony of then-director of National Intelligence Michael McConnell: ‘China continues to develop and field conventional theater range ballistic and cruise missile capabilities that will put US forces and regional bases throughout the Western Pacific and Asia at greater risk.... China’s arms sales in the Middle East are also destabilizing and a threat to US forces, while missile sales to Iran pose a threat to US forces in the Persian Gulf.’

“The U.S. intelligence community notes that China’s attempts to penetrate U.S. agencies are the most aggressive of all foreign intelligence organizations. The Chinese regime has launched some of the most aggressive and widespread espionage and cybersecurity attacks against U.S. agencies and contractors. Several years ago, the Chinese attacked my office computers and those of many other members of Congress and committees. China’s aerospace industry for decades has provided missile technologies and equipment to rogue regimes such as Iran and North Korea.

“China’s aims globally are often directly at odds with those of the U.S. According to the Pentagon, weapons that PRC entities supplied to Iran were ‘found to have been transferred to terrorist organizations in Iraq and Afghanistan.’

“China has failed to use its influence to bring about a peaceful resolution to the multiple crises in Sudan. It is a major arms supplier and source of economic strength to President Bashir’s government in Khartoum.

“China has been no friend in our engagement with Iran either. U.S. efforts to exert diplomatic pressure against Iran’s nuclear weapons program have been thwarted by China’s opposition to U.N. Security Council sanctions against Iran.

In a column last year, Robert Samuelson summed it up this way, ‘China’s worldview threatens America’s geopolitical and economic interests.’

“Consider our differing worldviews. The U.S. was founded on the premise that liberty is a birthright, that individual human life is sacred, that the freedom to worship according to the dictates of your conscience is paramount. The Chinese government operates antithetically to these beliefs.

“There is no clearer indication of the gulf that exists between our two countries than the Chinese government’s treatment of its own people.

“According to the Cardinal Kung Foundation, currently every one of the more than 30 underground bishops of the Catholic Church is either in jail, under house arrest, under strict surveillance, or in hiding. Protestant house church pastors are routinely intimidated and imprisoned. Their congregations worship in secret.

“An underground house church in Beijing – that I visited shortly before the 2008 Olympic Games – has come under growing harassment from the government for daring to hold a worship service in public. Dozens have been arrested or detained.

“According to the Congressional Executive Commission on China's Political Prisoner Database, as of July 2009, there were 689 Tibetan prisoners of conscience, 439 of whom were monks or nuns. Uyghur Muslims face persecution by the Chinese government as well. China maintains an extensive system of slave labor camps as large as that which existed in the former Soviet Union.

“This is but a snapshot of what can only be described as a grim human rights situation in China. But rather than being a voice for the voiceless, we see U.S. government officials – like the president’s science advisor – who spent three weeks in China last year kowtowing to the Chinese regime.

“Ronald Reagan once spoke of the U.S. constitution as a covenant ‘we have made not only with ourselves, but with all of mankind.’ We risk breaking that covenant with the kind of posture we display today.

“At the same time that the 2010 Nobel Prize recipient Liu Xiaobo was jailed, the 2009 Nobel Prize winner, President Obama, was hosting a state dinner for Chinese premier Hu Jintao and committing the U.S. to more cooperation on space with China. One of the world's worst human rights abusers does not deserve to be rewarded with greater ‘cooperation’ with the U.S.

“For these reasons, I have been very concerned by this administration’s apparent eagerness to work with China on its space program. The U.S. has no business cooperating with the PLA to help develop its space program.

“That is why I included language in the Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Resolution preventing NASA and the Office of Science and Technology Policy from using federal funds ‘to develop, design, plan, promulgate, implement or execute a bilateral policy, program, order, or contract of any kind to participate, collaborate, or coordinate bilaterally in any way with China or any Chinese-owned company.’

“Last week, President Obama’s science adviser, Dr. John Holdren, told the House Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations Subcommittee that the administration does not intend to comply with this statutory prohibition. One day after the hearing, Holdren was participating in a major bilateral summit with senior Chinese officials to discuss U.S.-China collaboration. I take this blatant disregard for the law very seriously and the committee is currently reviewing its options.

“The PLA’s space program merits a serious and thorough review so the Congress and Administration can fully understand the recent developments in this area.

“I want to thank you for holding this hearing today and look forward to the final report on the commission’s review.”