

## Headlines

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# Bush Issues Doctrine for US Control of Space

by Suzanne Goldenberg in Washington

George Bush has staked out a bold claim to the final frontier, asserting vigorously America's right to deny access to space to any adversary hostile to US interests, it emerged yesterday.

In a muscular overhaul of policy, the US president outlines the importance of space to the national interest, saying its domination is as crucial to America's defences as air or sea power.

The order also opposes the establishment of arms control treaties that would restrict US access to space, or set limits on its use of space. It calls for the development of space capabilities to support US intelligence and defence initiatives.

The document, first reported in yesterday's Washington Post, amounted to the first overhaul of US space policy in nearly a decade, but it comes two years after the publication of an air force doctrine on protecting US satellites and spacecraft. The defence secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, has also favoured the development of systems to protect satellites and space stations.

"The United States will preserve its rights, capabilities, and freedom of action in space; dissuade or deter others from either impeding those rights or developing capabilities intended to do so; take actions necessary to protect its space capabilities; respond to interference; and deny, if necessary, adversaries the use of space capabilities hostile to US national interests," the strategy says.

It goes on to stress that space activities have improve life in the US and around the world, enhancing security and economic growth and "revolutionising the way people view their world and the cosmos".

Mr Bush has sought to revive the national interest in space by calling for Americans to return to the moon in 15 years, and even use bases there to serve as a launch pad for Mars.

But reports of the space policy raised immediate concerns that America would be seen to

be trying to develop a fresh generation of space weapons.


However, the White House spokesman, Tony Snow, insisted there was no change, and that the exploitation of space for defensive purposes did not mean that American was seeking to develop space weapons.

"Protection of space assets does not imply some sort of forceful action," Fredrick Jones, a National Security Council spokesman, told the Associated Press. He said the US faced novel threats since the revision of the last policy declaration on space, and that the document reflected the importance of space in technological advances.

"Technology advances have increased the importance of and use of space," he said. "Now, we depend on space capabilities for things like ATMs, personal navigation, package tracking, radio services, and cell phone use."

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