Summary

On the thesis under the title “Chinese Contemporary Politics in the context of the Space Race”

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The dissertation aims to build a geopolitical model outlining the specific features of Chinese space policy, based on sustained, targeted actions by Beijing in eliminating competition, forging cooperation, and developing an irresistible presence in the race. The object of the study is the diverse, multi-layered, and multi-vector Chinese national space program. The analysis of the complex and dynamic structure will make it possible to formulate and clarify the parameters of China's economic, military, and civilian capacity to compete with the USA, Russia, and other upcoming space actors. The subject of the dissertation is the Chinese system of space policies, elements, and mechanisms of action, which determine the specifics, effective and sustainable results in the direction of successful use of space as an area of interest for security, economic growth, and technological development.

The first chapter researches the genesis and development of the Space Race and the creation of the main principles and guidelines for the space actors. In the first part of chapter one, the study focuses on the Soviet ballistic program, which later morphs into a space program. The ingenuity of the Soviet engineers, leads to the first accomplishments in space and commences the Space Race during the Cold War. Consecutive to the Soviet program, is an analysis of the US missile program greatly accredited to Robert Goddard and Wernher von Braun. The American answer to the launch of Sputnik is not delayed, and the United States succeed in overtaking the Soviets first to the Moon. The last part of chapter one, looks into the beginnings of the Chinese ballistic and nuclear program, as a direct repercussion of American militarism displayed in East Asia at the end of WWII and the Korean War. The People’s Republic of China recognizes their trailing position to the Soviet Union and the United States, and looks to commence their own technological progress through state reforms and determination for countering the other two superpowers.

The second chapter of the dissertation starts with an analysis of the establishment of the Chinese space program, whose specific features distinguish it from its competitors, among which

stands out its relationship with the Russian Federation. Chinese developments during the early stages of the Cold War lead to their first ballistic and space program as means to balancing the power. There is a shift in the strategical mindset of the Chinese elite, which recognizes the need for developing technology, should China wish to challenge other nations. In the second part of chapter two, the dissertation focuses on the overall Chinese space structure. The analysis recognizes the role of the various government institutions, state-owned enterprises, academia, military and private companies assisting the development of the Chinese space program. The last part of chapter two explores in-depth the relationship between the USSR/Russia and China starting as ideological allies, moving to state competitors, and ending as strategic partners against the US hegemony.

In chapter three, the dissertation does an in-depth study of the three main components Russia, the USA, and China within the emerging space model, where competition is the driving factor. In the first part of chapter three, the analysis considers the Russian Federation and their renewed aspirations towards the space sector. The downfall of the Soviet Union greatly hinders the Russian ambitions. Nevertheless, as space is becoming a key sector of interest, the Russian Federation recognizes the need to rejuvenate their space program. The dissertation moves to explore the contemporary US space program, and their attempts at preserving space hegemony through commercializing the sector. The role of American private companies has always played a role in space exploration and most likely will continue in the 21st century as well. Finally, the analysis explores the contemporary Chinese space program and the reciprocity exemplified by their current missions, space technologies and recognition of space as a vital area for power projection.

The conclusion overviews the analysis in the dissertation, which formulates all the necessary effects of the geopolitical model of competition and cooperation between the space programs of the three superpowers the United States, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. Conclusively it determines that Chinese state policy has consistently recognized space as a strategic sector and used outer space as an effective tool to increase its influence in international relations.