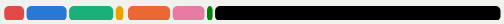
Space Watch

2026-W47 · 16 Nov – 22 Nov 2026
Makani Lab · Space Watch
Orbital Warfare · SATCOM · SDA · PNT · Satellite Control · Missile Warning · ISR · EW

BLUF — The PRC launched Shijian 24, purpose undisclosed, to sun-synchronous orbit on 18 Nov. Vulcan's 15 Nov failure leaves NSSL on Falcon 9; Senate appropriators back a $54.7B Space Force and halve Golden Dome to $9.4B. No PRC/Russian RPO, DPRK launch or GNSS event was reported. Attention: launch capacity for reconstitution.

LAST 7 DAYS BY MISSION AREA · 246 ITEMS



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RISING TERMS · 7D VS PRIOR

Iran		17 (+11.2)
budget		18 (+7.3)
Blue Origin		13 (+6)
Taiwan		8 (+5.9)

BY THE NUMBERS · 7D

Orbital launches 4 (2 PRC, 2 US, 0 failed) · max Kp 5
GPS NANUs 0 (0 unusable) · reentries 14 (9 payloads)
Conjunctions < 1 km, next 7 d: 9,466 (7225 active pairs)
Space-Track emergency-reportable CDMs 35, TIP reentries 14 (0 high-interest)

COUNTERSPACE SPOTLIGHT — SHIJIAN TEST SATELLITES (SJ-17/-21/-26) · PRC (CASC/PLA) · Shijian ('Practice') and TJS ('communication technology test') series

WHY NOW

Shijian 24 launched from Taiyuan on 18 Nov to a 639 x 654 km sun-synchronous orbit; China has not said what it does.

MENTIONS, 30D · PACOM RELEVANCE

0 this week. Shijian GEO activity sits over the Pacific GEO belt; early 18 SDS custody of SJ-24 informs theater SDA.

CAPABILITIES / TTPS

- GEO capture and tow: SJ-21 moved a dead Beidou-2 (2022)
- GEO refuelling: SJ-25 refuelled SJ-21 (2025)
- LEO test satellites of undisclosed purpose

IMPLICATIONS

- SJ-24 may host RPO, sensing or servicing trials in LEO.
- Shijian GEO servicing work matures near theater SATCOM.

Orbital Warfare

Counterspace threats and space superiority: ASAT tests and weapons, co-orbital a

From Refueling to Relocation: SSC Expands On-Orbit Support Capabilities | Q&A with Col. Scott Carstetter, Director of Servicing Mobility & Logistics

Space Systems Command · 2026-11-16

SSC's servicing office pursues sustained space maneuver and life extension (SSC); Senate appropriators cite two refuelling interfaces in programs of record.

So what: Refuelable satellites could maneuver in the theater without spending their service life.

Consider: Be aware; consider asking which theater GEO assets will carry the qualified refuelling interfaces.

SPACECOM · NORTHCOM · Acquisition & contracts

Missile Warning

Missile warning and tracking from space and ground: SBIRS and Next-Gen OPIR, res

CR not slowing Golden Dome progress, deputy director argues

DefenseScoop · 2026-11-19

Golden Dome's deputy director said all FY26 funds are obligated and C2 tests passed; IOC is set for summer 2028 (DefenseScoop).

So what: Golden Dome sets the MW/MT sensors and C2 the theater will share tracks with.

Consider: Consider following how Golden Dome C2 will exchange tracks with INDOPACOM missile defense.

NORTHCOM · Missile defense · Budget & policy · Golden Dome

SATCOM

Military and commercial satellite communications: WGS, MUOS, AEHF/ESS, protected

SpaceX's Starshield troubles in Ukraine could threaten its broader military business

Ars Technica (Space) · 2026-11-20

Rep. Himes, likely House Intel chair, says SpaceX's 'potentially unilateral modification' of the Starshield contract calls every U.S. contract with SpaceX into question (Ars, citing CNN).

So what: Congressional pressure could reshape Starshield, a pLEO SATCOM path theater users rely on.

Consider: Consider reviewing PACE plans for theater users who depend on Starshield or Starlink alone.

EUCOM · Proliferated LEO · Commercial integration · Starlink / Starshield

Space Domain Awareness

Knowing what is on orbit and what the environment is doing: space surveillance a

China leaves 52 rocket bodies in orbit while building satellite networks

SpaceNews · 2026-11-20

China has left 52 rocket bodies in orbit while building its LEO satellite networks, according to SpaceNews. A Long March 8A put nine more SatNet (Guowang) satellites up on 20 Nov (Launch Library 2).

So what: Spent PRC upper stages add conjunction load in the LEO shells theater pLEO systems use.

Consider: Be aware; consider watching 18 SDS screening for PRC rocket bodies near theater LEO assets.

PACOM · SPACECOM · Debris & reentry · Proliferated LEO

HEO Unveils Insights Next SDA Tool

Payload · 2026-11-19

Australia's HEO released Insights Next, which places its non-Earth imagery of 1,200 objects from 7,500+ missions into 3D, showing orientation, payload layout and pointing (Payload). HEO is expanding imaging to GEO.

So what: Allied commercial imaging can show what a PRC satellite is pointing at, not just where it is.

Consider: Be aware of HEO as an allied NEI source for characterizing objects of interest.

SPACECOM · PACOM · Commercial integration · Allies & partners

Space Enterprise

The service and the enterprise behind the mission areas: force design and organi

ULA's Latest Launch Failure Spells Trouble for Space Force

Air & Space Forces Magazine · 2026-11-19

Vulcan failed to reach orbit on 15 Nov with 40 Amazon Leo satellites, its first flight in nine months; ULA cites inadequate fuel supply to the BE-4s (A&SF). New Glenn, also BE-4 powered, has not flown since May.

So what: Two of three NSSL heavy-lift options share the BE-4; Falcon 9 carries the load for now.

Consider: Be aware NSSL manifest slips may delay theater-relevant launches; consider tracking the ULA review.

SPACECOM · NORTHCOM · Launch · Industrial base & supply chain · NSSL / launch programs

Senate Backs Bigger Space Force, but Trims Pentagon Plans

Air & Space Forces Magazine · 2026-11-18

The Senate's FY27 defense bill gives USSF $54.7B (FY26 $31.6B; request $59.1B), $7.08B for NSSL including SDA launch, and $9.4B for Golden Dome against a $17.5B ask (A&SF). Conference follows.

So what: Sets the money for launch, procurement and Golden Dome the theater will draw on.

Consider: Be aware of the House-Senate gap; consider tracking theater-relevant lines through conference.

NORTHCOM · STRATCOM · Budget & policy · Launch · NSSL / launch programs

Nothing significant this week: PNT / Navwar · Satellite Control · ISR · Electronic Warfare

WATCH LIST

- USSF-266 (F9, Vandenberg) 24 Nov 1555Z; Shenzhou 24 25 Nov 0018Z; LM-2D, undisclosed payload, 26 Nov (LL2).
- 18 SDS screening: CBERS 2 and IRIDIUM 42, both payloads, Pc 3.9e-3, 225 m, TCA 23 Nov 1446Z (CDM 1817449724).
- TIPs in AOR: STARLINK-1114 23 Nov 0433Z ±8 h, 14.9N 161.5E; STARLINK-1456 24 Nov 1547Z ±14 h, 36.5S 107.8E.

RECOMMENDATIONS (FOR AWARENESS)

- Consider requesting 18 SDS custody updates on Shijian 24 (NORAD 101415) for any maneuver or proximity operation.
- Be aware Vulcan's grounding may slip NSSL missions; consider reviewing which theater-relevant launches are at risk.
- Consider reviewing PACE plans for theater SATCOM users that rely on Starshield or Starlink alone.