

25th SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE POLICY, REGULATIONS AND ECONOMICS (E3)
National policies and regional cooperation (4)

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VIETNAM'S SPACE PROGRAM: AN OVERVIEW

Abstract

From the high-profile successes of China, to the realignment of the Indian space program, to the restructuring of Japan's national space effort, Asia has been a focus of space activity for a number of years. One country of particular note is Vietnam. Although a relatively late starter, Vietnam has been pursuing a significant national space capability with a great deal of energy and determination. Space is becoming an arena not only for technical growth, but also for the evolution of Vietnam's relationship with several countries around the Pacific rim, including its neighbor China (with whom it fought in 1978), Japan (which occupied Vietnam during the Second World War), and the United States (whose relationship with Vietnam has been complex and continues to evolve). The direction that these relationships take in future years will become increasingly important, particularly as Vietnam continues its growth and modernization. Examination of the nature, structure, and goals its space program will provide a useful background for understanding current and future developments in Vietnam and their implications for the future of the region.