QUILTY SPACE

MEGACONSTELLATION MONTHLY

UPDATES & QUICKTAKES ON THE MEGACONSTELLATIONS MAKING HEADLINES

JUNE 2025

PWSA NNOUNCEMENTS

- **Tranche 1 Trailblazer>** On June 23, York Space Systems successfully launched and established contact with "Dragoon," the first satellite in the Space Development Agency's (SDA) Tranche 1 Demonstration and Experimentation System (T1DES) program. Part of a 12-satellite, $200M contract awarded in 2022, Dragoon was originally slated to launch this year alongside SDA's Tranche 1 Tracking Layer (T1TRK) satellites of the Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture (PWSA). But with the remaining spacecraft still in production, York instead pulled Dragoon forward, integrated it onto a SpaceX rideshare mission for early deployment, and repurposed it as a TACSATCOM tech demonstrator for the SDA.

- **BAE Watch>** Space Systems Command (SSC) just awarded BAE Systems a $1.2B contract to build 10 missile-tracking satellites for Epoch 2 of its Resilient Missile Warning and Tracking (MWT) program. Scheduled for first delivery in FY2029, these MEO satellites are designed to track everything from ICBMs to maneuvering hypersonics, offering broader coverage and faster response than legacy GEO systems. This is the follow-on to Epoch 1, which includes 12 satellites from Millennium Space Systems (six awarded in 2023 and a second plane of six awarded for $386M in 2024). Epoch 1 launches are planned between FY2026 and early FY2028. Epoch 1 will establish the baseline MEO tracking capability, while Epoch 2 delivers the initial warfighting configuration. BAE also received a $151M contract in March 2025 to upgrade the "FORGE" command-and-control (C2) system, which aims to consolidate satellite operations across legacy SBIRS and Next-Gen OPIR constellations. Together, these awards provide a sensor-to-shooter pipeline for Golden Dome while also cementing BAE as a key player.

- **GDay Delay>** After the registration site crashed and the event outgrew two venues, the now twice-canceled Golden Dome Industry day (initially set for April 29, then June 11) may either be quietly scrapped altogether or reworked as a classified event to limit participation and manage a vendor stampede eyeing a ~$25B starter fund for the ~$175B Golden Dome.

- **SHIELD to Field Golden Dome>** The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) is rolling out a $151B Scalable Homeland Innovative Enterprise Layered Defense (SHIELD) IDIQ, which will serve as the acquisition vehicle for the Golden Dome initiative under Gen. Michael Guetlein's leadership. This move centralizes what had been a scattered landscape of now-canceled RFPs (e.g., CoMETS, MIOES) into a 10-year, multi-award framework.

- **Golden Dome Act 1>** On June 24, Congress released the "Ground and Orbital Launched Defeat of Emergent Nuclear Destruction and Other Missile Engagements (GOLDEN DOME)" – a bill sporting what might be the clunkiest backronym in legislative history. The 44-page Golden Dome Act draft places a down payment of ~$23B on a next-gen missile defense vision that greenlights boost-phase interceptors and commercial ISR/comms integration (think Starshield). The draft leans heavily into SDA-style spiral development, rapid iteration, and multi-vendor, all-domain interoperability.

A few key highlights:

- SDA "shall remain an independent element of USSF" and is cleared to "accelerate development" and "rapidly field" PWSA Tranches (days later: T3 got benched).

- Warnings about using "as a service" contracts *if* they shrink the space industrial base (read: no winner-take-all-Starlinking).

- SDA and MDA are ordered to fast-track Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensors (HBTSS).

- DoD must deliver a feasibility study within 180 days of enactment.

Notable line items:

- $5.9B> Space-based missile defense and sensor networks.

- $3.1B> Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor vehicles (SDA Tracking Layer).

- $2.5B> Air moving target indicator systems (likely airborne, but space-based assets with radar or RF payloads might compete).

- $1.5B> Resilient Positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) systems (including Quantum-enhanced) that can operate in GPS-denied environments.

- $100M> SDA satellite sensors.

- $100M> Integrated C2 software and architecture.

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MILNET ECLIPSES T3

Hopes for an interoperable, open-competition Tranche 3 award – originally expected to be split among as many as nine different vendors across three separate variants – were dashed just two days after the Golden Dome Act draft debuted on June 24. In hindsight, the writing was on the wall a week before.

On June 18, at the MILSATCOM conference in Virginia, Space Force Col. Jeff Weisler (Delta 8) tipped the Pentagon's hand by revealing plans for a new ~480-satellite "hybrid mesh network" called MILNET. The not-so-secret Starshield constellation would be partially funded by SSC and operated by SpaceX, but with a Delta 8 mission director in charge of "the timing and tempo of warfighting."

The real plot twist landed during the June 26 Senate budget hearings when it became clear that this new SpaceX-led Starshield megaconstellation was on track to ***replace*** SDA's PWSA Tranche 3. Senator Chris Coons pressed Air Force Secretary (and reputed SpaceX loyalist) Troy Meink about why $277M[1] from the just-published RDT&E DoD FY26 budget request was redirected from Tranche 3 to MILNET (the details of which are likely buried in the NRO's black budget, just like the previously reported $1.8B "Strength in Numbers" Starshield constellation). Meink stammered, offering vague reassurances about "looking forward to" Tranche 2 launches, but pointedly refused to say whether Tranche 3 had just been Starlinked.

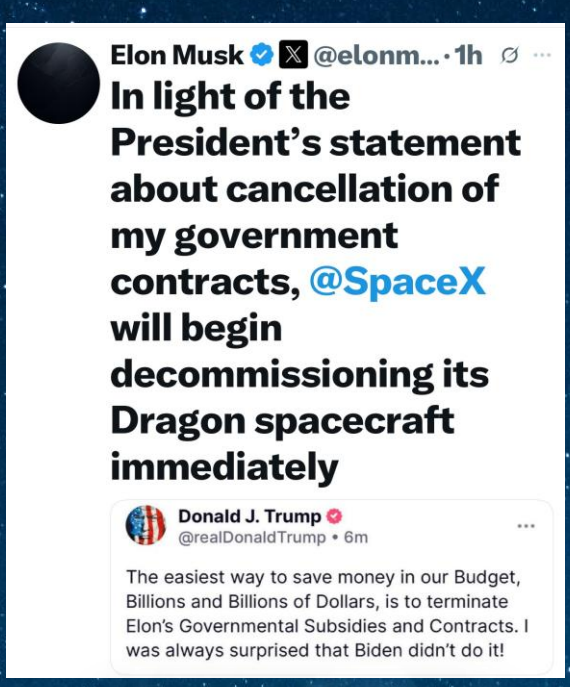
Since the Tranche 3 tracking RFI for 54 satellites was updated in April 2025 (just as SDA Director Derek Tournear was reinstated), the agency fell conspicuously silent on all three Tranche 3 Transport variants originally scheduled for Q3'25 awards. Now it seems those long-anticipated contracts might be sidelined indefinitely for MuskNET.

With Tranche 3 once expected to field around 140 satellites, MILNET's much larger ~480-bird constellation also suggests the Pentagon may be handing SpaceX the keys to the *entire* SDA PWSA Transport Layer. If a "Starshield-takes-all" scenario unfolds, not everyone on Capitol Hill will be clapping. Senators Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) and Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), along with Rep. Mark Messmer (R-Ind.), are principal sponsors of the Golden Dome Act draft, and specific language written into the bill calls for competitive bidding and discourages any sole-source, as-a-service megadeals (like what's unfolding with MILNET). However, their (possibly symbolic) effort is somewhat toothless. Congress only sets the guardrails. The DoD, and especially the executive branch, have the ultimate say in how programs are executed and contracts are awarded. Plus, a key clause in the bill states that the SDA *"...shall be exempt from the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System [JCIDS] requirements process."* This gives the agency the latitude to fast-track the program outside the usual Pentagon oversight and red tape. The news makes Musk's *...well, I guess if we must* Xeet about Golden Dome just a couple of months ago, look performative.

1. Coons is referring to line item for "pLEO SATCOM (MILNET) $277,407,000" on page 62 of the budget request.

> *In the FY26 budget we learned that DoD is halting the Space Development Agency's Tranche 3 Transport Layer. And that work, which has been going on for several years and has had robust competition and open standards, has been replaced by something called 'MILNET,' which is being (sole) sourced to SpaceX. No competition. No open architecture. No leveraging a dynamic space ecosystem. This is a massive and important contract. Secretary Meink: doesn't handing this to SpaceX make us dependent on their proprietary technology and avoid the very positive benefits of competition and open architecture?*

Senator Chris Coons during a Senate Appropriations Committee defense subcommittee hearing on June 26, 2025.



On June 5, the world watched as President Trump and Elon Musk aired their grievances in a headline-grabbing spat on X. The saga started when Musk publicly slammed Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill," sparking a chain reaction of Xeets that, to many observers, felt less like a genuine feud than political theater. While the exchange could have been choreographed to loudly announce the end of a relationship that was becoming a branding liability to them both, it brought an important issue to a head. Can the U.S. government really afford to pin its space ambitions on a single contractor so volatile he'd (unironically) threaten to strand astronauts as political collateral damage? Scripted or not, the meltdown illustrated how partnering with a solo vendor could go sideways and turn into a hostage situation.

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mynaric

DELIVERS FOR TRANCHE 1

Mynaric's industrial-scale laser terminal production is ramping back up, with triple-digit delivery yields after a rocky supply chain start to 2025. On June 5, the Munich-based supplier confirmed the shipment of 100+ CONDOR Mk3 optical communications terminals (OCTs) to a prime contractor for SDA's Tranche 1. Likely Northrop Grumman, who tapped Mynaric back in 2022 to supply OCTs for its 42 T1 Transport Layer (T1TL) satellites (four per satellite) and 14 T1 Tracking Layer (T1TRK) satellites (three per satellite).

While Mynaric is finally delivering terminals in bulk, its earlier supply chain faceplants contributed to the Tranche 1 delays. According to a June 2025 GAO report, the SDA needed 500 OCTs for T1TL and had only received 20 by January 2025. The shortfall prompted the SDA to pony up more cash for terminal makers to help speed production, as Tranche 1 is already nearly a year behind schedule.

The company also announced the rollout of its next-gen CONDOR Mk3.1 terminal, designed for SDA's Tranche 2 with a jump to 100 Gbps data rates. The speed boost raises a new technical question: will these terminals offer backward compatibility for mesh interoperability? Or is the SDA is teeing up yet another round of shifting lasercom standards for the supply chain to chase? For Tranche 2, both Rocket Lab (18 satellites) and Northrop (74 satellites) have OCT deals with Mynaric.

All of this is unfolding as Mynaric navigates Germany's StaRUG pre-solvency restructuring and heads toward acquisition by Rocket Lab.

EU SPACE POLICY

European Commission

On June 25, the European Commission published two sweeping space policy blueprints: the EU Space Act and the Vision for the European Space Economy. The Space Act proposes a single EU rulebook that replaces 13 national regimes with bloc-wide requirements for debris mitigation, satellite deorbiting, and tailored cybersecurity, covering both EU and non-EU operators. Sustainability is at the forefront, with mandatory environmental assessments and support for eco-innovation, such as in-orbit servicing and debris removal. The Vision outlines 40+ concrete actions, including new seed and growth investment facilities, a financing platform linked to CASSINI, and the launch of "Space Team Europe" — a top-level forum uniting the Commission, ESA, EUSPA, national agencies, and industry to break down silos and drive joint initiatives. The plan also calls for new procurement tools, a "competitive compass" to track Europe's global space market share, and streamlined collaboration across flagship efforts like Copernicus, Galileo, EGNOS, and IRIS².

NATO'S NEW COMMERCIAL SPACE STRATEGY

On June 25, NATO publicly released its first-ever Commercial Space Strategy at the summit in The Hague, marking a clear pivot toward integrating private industry into the alliance's defense architecture. It seems NATO wants to supercharge defense spending by onboarding commercial space capabilities and investing in something cooler than GEO weather satellites. Think launch, ISR, secure comms, resilient PNT, and dual-use everything.

While the strategy was approved by member states in February, the release was timed to coincide with the bloc's pledge to increase defense spending to 5% of GDP by 2035. The strategy is the international analog to the U.S. DoD Commercial Space Integration Strategy. Both read more like big-picture visions and guiding principles for integrating commercial space across sprawling, multi-actor bureaucracies than like how-to manuals. Nowhere is this convergence more obvious than in NATO's introduction of a "Front Door" mechanism — a single industry interface modeled almost verbatim after SSC's Front Door.

The strategy's overarching goals:

Leverage commercial solutions› Fast-track buying from the space sector instead of building everything in-house.

Continuous access› Pool commercial providers to guarantee "persistent services" even if the world is on fire.

Coherence› Herd 32 cats into a single procurement interface, standardize what can be standardized, and avoid vendor lock-in or overreliance on any one supplier.

The strategy falls short of earmarking dollar amounts or describing flagship programs, but the message is clear: member states should move away from bespoke, government-grown solutions and adopt commercial solutions, much like their counterparts have across the pond.

According to an ESPI Space Venture report published on June 20, European space startups raised a record €1.5B in 2024, marking a 56% jump y/y and the region's largest single-year increase since 2014. Nearly 80% of European space venture funding came from public or mixed public-private investor groups, compared to just 20% in the U.S. The study also found that nearly 40% of new investment is flowing into the security and defense sectors.

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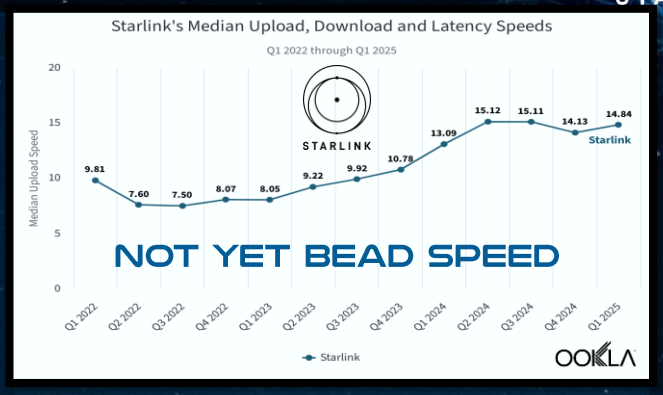
STARLINK: A GLOBAL GLIMPSE



Now that the NTIA has restructured BEAD to put every broadband technology on the same "priority" level – eschewing a fiber-first preference – the question is, which LEO satellite players actually clear the program's performance bar? Shockingly, the answer isn't Starlink. At least, not yet.

According to a June 10 Ookla study, Starlink's median download speed in the U.S. now clocks in at 104.7 Mbps, nearly double what it was in 2022. Upload speeds have also improved, but still land at a median of 14.8 Mbps — just shy of the BEAD-required 20 Mbps threshold for uploads. When it comes to meeting the full definition of broadband under BEAD rules, only 17.4% of Starlink users nationwide actually get *both* 100 Mbps down and 20 Mbps up.

Latency tells a similar story. Starlink has made headway here, reporting a national median of 45 ms in early 2025, which is well within BEAD's maximum of 100 ms. But outliers remain. In Alaska and Hawaii, users are seeing median latency of 105 ms and 115 ms, respectively (likely a function of satellite density and geography).

As for affordability and access, Starlink is now pitching free equipment for new customers who commit to a yearlong plan, but this "free" dishy promotion is limited to certain areas and comes with fine print. Starlink's entry-level Residential Lite plan is $80/month and delivers speeds that, per its own marketing, can dip as low as 45 Mbps. That is well below BEAD's standard, especially during peak hours when Lite traffic is deprioritized. And while the BEAD rules strip out the low-cost mandate, many states' proposed fiber plans were as low as $30/month.

Even before the rewrite, state broadband offices were offering up Starlink as a BEAD bridge until fiber infrastructure could be rolled out. Maine and Texas have launched LEO satellite pilot programs to reach the hardest-to-serve locations — sometimes covering equipment costs and installation for unconnected homes. But even these efforts have seen limited uptake. In Maine, only 4% of qualifying households have subscribed.

Trump's Commerce Secretary, Howard Lutnick, may have cleared a path for Starlink to compete for BEAD – a subsidy program Musk often criticized for its sluggishness. But will Lutnick slow walk it long enough for Starlink's next-gen V3s to achieve BEAD speeds? If not, the gap between Starlink's promise and performance may still be a bridge too far for BEAD.

REALITY CHECK FOR STARLINK DTC

Madrid researchers analyzed more than a million U.S. crowdsourced measurements of Starlink's direct-to-cell (DTC) beta from October 2024 to April 2025, revealing that the service is mostly functional in remote counties, national parks, and disaster-hit areas where terrestrial networks don't reach. Other findings from the study published on June 10 show that while Starlink's RSRP (signal strength) is much weaker than terrestrial LTE, it's impressively consistent due to the outdoor, line-of-sight nature of satellite links.

Starlink's Reference Signal Received Quality (RSRQ) was generally *better* than terrestrial LTE, due to extremely light network usage during this SMS-only phase, which also means minimal interference.

Starlink's Signal-to-Interference-plus-Noise Ratio (SINR) – which is a key measure of how usable a wireless signal is compared to the background noise and interference – came in *lower* than ground networks. Its median SINR of 0 dB means that the signal was the same strength as the combined interference and background noise. The higher the SINR, the better the connection, and the faster data can be transmitted. In terrestrial cell networks, median SINR values typically range from 5 to 10 dB, indicating a strong and relatively undisturbed signal.

The researchers calculated that Starlink's DTC service currently supports only ~4 Mbps downlink *per beam* for outdoor users — enough for emergency messaging or low-bandwidth applications, but nowhere near data. They estimate that with more spectrum, more radiated power (boosted in March when the FCC approved Starlink's out-of-band emissions waiver), and continued satellite launches, throughput could potentially triple to 12 Mbps per beam.

This technical reality check coincides with several commercial and regulatory milestones for Starlink DTC in June. T-Mobile announced it will exit beta and go commercial on July 23, offering SMS, MMS, and short audio messaging (with data service to follow in October). In Ukraine, Veon's Kyivstar secured regulatory approval to kick off Starlink DTC field tests, aiming for SMS messaging in war-impacted and rural regions later this year. One New Zealand rolled out a nationwide IoT service using Starlink DTC to connect everything from beehives to farm sensors. Meanwhile, Telstra became the first in Australia to launch Starlink-powered SMS service, with support for more devices (including iPhone) in the pipeline. Starlink MNO partner Optus is not too far behind. Finally, SpaceX capped off the month by completing its first-gen Starlink DTC constellation after a 528-day, 660-satellite launch campaign that began on Jan. 2, 2024. It's an impressive cadence, even if it fell short of SpaceX's December 2023 goal of 840 satellites in 180 days.

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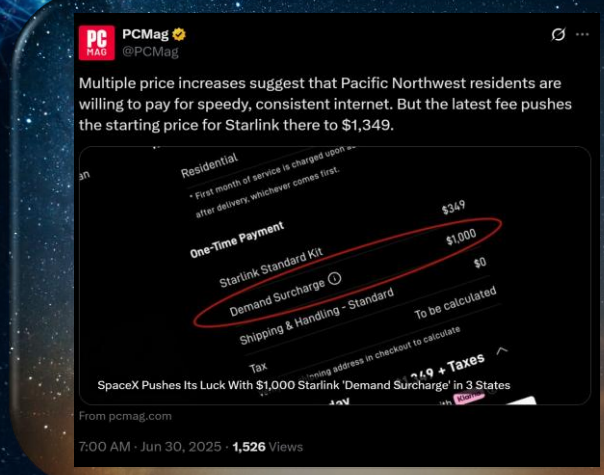
STARLINK: A GLOBAL GLIMPSE

After a year of legal wrangling (and a not-so-casual brush with a potential satellite device ban), the Ministry of Digital Development greenlit Starlink Kazakhstan to operate in the country starting Q3 2025.



STARLINK AFRICA UPDATE

- After a 7-month pause on new activations, Starlink reopened sign-ups in Nairobi and other Kenyan regions in June. The freeze, which began in late 2024, was triggered by network congestion as demand outpaced Starlink's satellite and ground station capacity — even after a new Nairobi ground station launched in January. The bottleneck left many with idle kits and no service. With the freeze now over, customers in Nairobi and other major towns can once again activate their Starlink kits. Local resellers report the network is back to full capacity, but surging demand continues to test Starlink's infrastructure. Hardware and monthly costs remain steep (~$232 upfront and $50/month), making Starlink a premium solution, especially outside cities where fiber and 5G are spotty or nonexistent.
- Starlink recently expanded into DR Congo, Lesotho, and Guinea-Bissau – bringing its total to 22 markets in Africa as of June. Nigeria is a stronghold, although affordability remains the key obstacle. Even for middle-class users, Starlink's upfront costs can be staggering.
- Starlink disconnected thousands of South African users who were accessing its service through international roaming and unofficial resellers. This move comes after mounting pressure from South Africa's telecom regulator, ICASA, which warned both distributors and customers that using Starlink without local authorization is illegal. Starlink's official launch remains blocked by licensing requirements, including the rule that 30% of any telecom operator must be locally owned (a BEE provision SpaceX has not met). In response, Communications Minister Solly Malatsi recently floated a draft policy that could allow companies like Starlink to satisfy empowerment rules via infrastructure investment instead of direct equity. But until those new regulations are in place, Starlink is off-limits in South Africa.

STARLINK EUROPE UPDATE

- Despite a headline-grabbing 93% revenue jump to $693M in 2024, Starlink's Irish entity eked out just $12M in after-tax profit — a slim 1.73% margin. While the company is registered in Dublin, its annual report states it "delivers Starlink services to markets outside the U.S.," indicating it handles operations and invoicing for multiple international markets and not just Ireland.
- Elon Musk's plan to add 40 Starlink antennas above Leuk, Switzerland, is running into stiff resistance from locals. The antennas — each 2.5 meters high and encased in domes — would expand Starlink's European ground infrastructure. But, despite the site's history with big satellite dishes, 100+ residents showed up at a public meeting to voice concerns about health risks (citing recent WHO studies on electromagnetic radiation), potential military targeting, and reputational damage from Musk's polarizing brand. A new local opposition group is already collecting signatures to formally object to the project, which is being pushed by German firm Signalhorn AG on behalf of SpaceX.
- Starlink is dismantling its ground station on the Isle of Man, relocating antennas — reportedly due to higher local costs — to a new site in Ireland, where Kuiper is also establishing a ground infrastructure presence.

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ECHOSTAR'S CANARY IN THE COAL MINE MOMENT

EchoStar's pleading for the FCC not to "pull the rug out from under" its entire 5G venture Carried a touch of irony this month. The company's legal team dug up some of FCC Chair Brendan Carr's own greatest hits, quoting his 2023 House testimony that warned about a regulatory "about-face" while railing against the exact sort of policy U-turn he's now driving.

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM JUNE:

- June 2: In a SEC filing (Form 8-K), EchoStar discloses it had "elected not to make approximately $183M in cash interest payments due on June 2, 2025, "...to allow time for the FCC to provide the relief requested in our FCC filing prior to the expiration of the 30-day grace period." Basically, the interest payment was being withheld not for lack of funds, but as explicit leverage in the regulatory standoff.
- June 6: EchoStar files reply comments (and technical studies) defending its right to the 2 GHz spectrum. It tries to dunk on SpaceX by offering detailed interference studies, photos of cell sites, and a legal lecture on "retroactivity." The 88-page defense accuses the FCC of regulatory whiplash and warns that yanking its licenses would "destroy the nation's only 5G Open RAN network" and chill billions in investment. The filing is a legal firehose that covers due process, investment-backed expectations, national security, and input from 60+ vendors, contractors, rural carriers, public interest orgs, think tanks, and former FCC commissioners who all wrote in support of EchoStar's position. EchoStar defends its 5G buildout, claiming over 24,000 cell sites, 1.3 million on-net customers, and "exceeding performance targets by 527%." The company also paints the loss of its spectrum rights as a direct threat to America's only nationwide Open RAN 5G network.
- June 13: EchoStar's execs (yes, including the Ergens) meet with Chairman Carr's staff. They repeat their "dark cloud of uncertainty" refrain, insist retroactive rule changes would be "unlawfully arbitrary," and warn of devastating impacts on U.S. investment.
- June 18: SpaceX attorneys fire back:
  - Claiming EchoStar never provided real 2 GHz MSS to U.S. customers.
  - Calling EchoStar's buildout stats "academic thought exercises" with "antennas as nonexistent as its MSS service."
  - Asserting that EchoStar's coalition of supporters is either on its payroll or has a vested interest.
  - Mentioning that several other satellite players (Iridium, Omnispace, Sateliot, Kepler, et al) want the spectrum too.
- June 20: EchoStar files comments *against* T-Mobile's 800 MHz spectrum assignment to Grain Management, claiming T-Mobile has left spectrum unused in multiple markets.
- June 23: Not content with its June 18 missive, SpaceX fired off a single-page letter to the FCC, accusing EchoStar of never having provided any 2 GHz satellite or terrestrial service to U.S. consumers and of having "no intent to do so" with any currently licensed satellites. SpaceX argues that EchoStar's buildout showings don't meet band-specific requirements, and that the company misused its spectrum rights "under false pretenses" to block competition for over a decade. SpaceX's bottom line: the FCC should "swiftly clarify that EchoStar automatically forfeited its rights to the band long ago and accept applications from new competitive satellite entrants." Translation: Elon's ready to collect, and he wants the FCC to make EchoStar pay up. Yesterday.

EchoStar's defense strategy this month boils down to: "We've spent billions, met our buildouts, don't move the goalposts, and please ignore that missed bond payment."

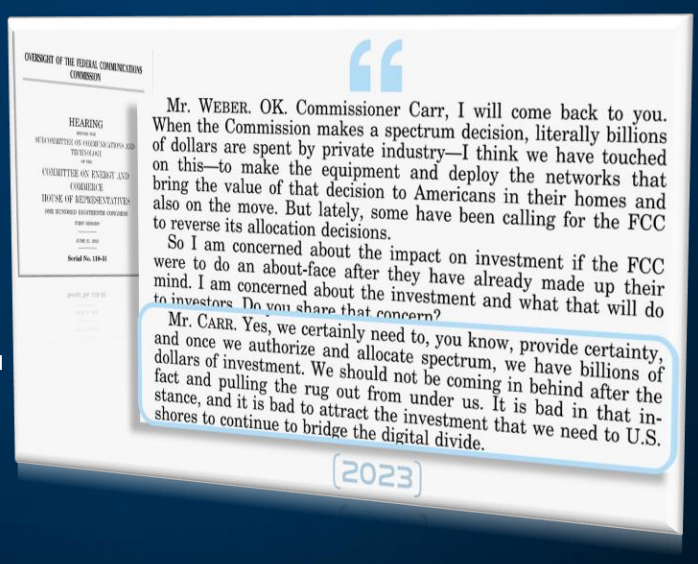
While SpaceX is countering with: "They're spectrum hoarders with imaginary cell sites and no MSS service, so let us (and maybe some others) bring 2 GHz into the DTC future."

TRUMP GETS INVOLVED, BECAUSE OF COURSE HE DOES

Bloomberg first reported on June 12 that President Trump met with EchoStar's Charlie Ergen. Then, *Reuters* revealed on June 27 that Trump personally nudged both EchoStar's Charlie Ergen and FCC Chair Carr to reach an "amicable solution" over the spectrum saga. It was an odd intervention for the executive branch to make, but no more confusing than a (possibly related) Golden Phone.

While Ergen likely appreciated the refereeing, the FCC didn't seem to Carr very much.

In fact, Chairman Carr doubled down, saying the "status quo needs to change," and that there's only a "narrow window of opportunity."


OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

HEARING

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Serial No. 118–II

Mr. WEBER. OK. Commissioner Carr, I will come back to you. When the Commission makes a spectrum decision, literally billions of dollars are spent by private industry—I think we have touched on this—to make the equipment and deploy the networks that bring the value of that decision to Americans in their homes and also on the move. But lately, some have been calling for the FCC to reverse its allocation decisions.

So I am concerned about the impact on investment if the FCC were to do an about-face after they have already made up their mind. I am concerned about the investment and what that will do to investors. Do you share that concern?

Mr. CARR. Yes, we certainly need to, you know, provide certainty, and once we authorize and allocate spectrum, we have billions of dollars of investment. We should not be coming in behind after the fact and pulling the rug out from under us. It is bad in that instance, and it is bad to attract the investment that we need to U.S. shores to continue to bridge the digital divide.

2023

EUROPE'S "STRATEGIC JEWEL"

The French government will nearly double its stake in Eutelsat Group to 29.99%, anchoring a €1.35B capital injection announced June 19 that cements the Paris-based satellite operator as Europe's flagship player in sovereign space connectivity. The move, unveiled alongside record stock gains, positions Eutelsat as the state's not-so-secret weapon for both commercial and military ambitions, at a time when Europe is scrambling for a homegrown alt-Starlink. At the recent Paris Air Show, French President Emmanuel Macron said it's time Europe becomes "a space power once again, with France at its heart."

The capital raise, led by Agence des Participations de l'Etat (APE), will see France pour €526.4M into Eutelsat and absorb Bpifrance's shares, with back-up from shareholders Bharti, CMA CGM, and Le Fonds Stratégique de Participations. The UK government is reportedly eyeing participation as well.

The buy-in came just 24 hours after France's defense ministry signed a 10-year, €1B framework deal with Eutelsat to secure military-grade, sovereign LEO satellite capacity under the NEXUS program. The agreement gives the French armed forces priority access to Eutelsat's OneWeb network — an asset officials tout as critical for operational resilience and autonomy in the face of mounting geopolitical uncertainty.

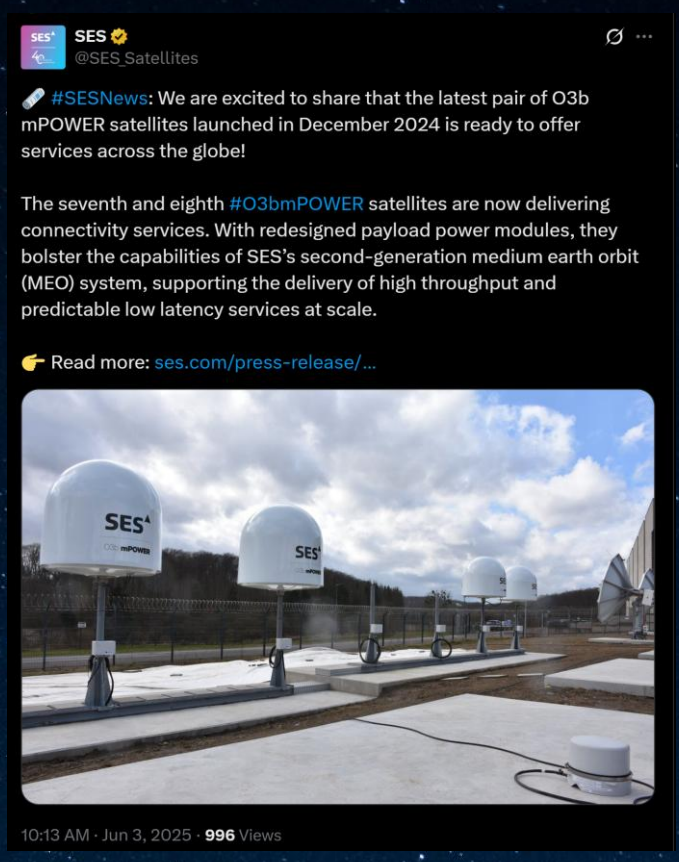
Commercial partnerships are piling up, too. On June 5, Orange and Eutelsat announced a multi-year deal to integrate OneWeb LEO capacity into Orange's global portfolio for enterprise, government, and mobile backhaul — pitching the network as Europe's answer to secure, high-throughput satellite connectivity for critical sectors (Orange is also deepening ties with Telesat's Lightspeed LEO and remains Eutelsat's exclusive reseller for GEO broadband in France).

Eutelsat's global expansion kept pace on the ground, too, with the June opening of a OneWeb gateway in Angola — a milestone aimed at extending its reach across Central Africa. The plan is backed by local partners and the result of a 5-year regulatory push.

On June 18, Safran Data Systems (Syrlinks) was tapped by Airbus to provide tracking, telemetry, and command (TT&C) systems for 100 next-gen LEO satellites under the Eutelsat-OneWeb banner — a serial manufacturing deal set to ensure constellation longevity and performance.

All this activity is the prelude to IRIS², where Eutelsat will serve as its largest private investor and operator, assuming the fragmented European politics and budget shortfalls don't kill the project first.

In a matter of weeks, Eutelsat vaulted from hybrid satellite operator with a patchwork pedigree to Europe's "Strategic Jewel."



SES-INTELSAT MERGER IS A GO

In early June, both the European Commission and UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) gave the go-ahead for SES' $3.1B buyout of Intelsat. The CMA ruled that the deal poses no real threat to competition in the in-flight connectivity (IFC) market because Starlink, Viasat, and Inmarsat already own the runway for IFC growth.

The CMA found that in 2024, Viasat Inmarsat led the global IFC market for active aircraft, capturing 30–40% of the market, while Intelsat and Panasonic each accounted for 20–30%. But, for "backlog" aircraft (those with IFC systems procured but not yet installed), Starlink had snagged a whopping 50–60% share, with Viasat close behind at 40–50%. The report also highlights Amazon Kuiper's impending entry along with a surge of new LEO capacity, which is expected to drive down prices and increase competition.

Most airlines and third-party suppliers polled by the CMA shrugged at the SES–Intelsat tie-up, calling it either a "neutral" or outright "positive" move, understanding the need to band together if the duo wants any shot at competing with vertically integrated disruptors like Starlink. The report framed the merger as a defensive play (not a power grab), especially as GEO players may be heading toward their evolve or evaporate era.

The CMA also reviewed whether to examine maritime, media, fixed data, etc., but explicitly chose not to, due to the parties' "low combined shares" and "limited or no increment" in those areas. All the detailed findings, stats, and theories of harm are for IFC only. And the merger was ultimately authorized without conditions.

QUILTY SPACE

MEGACONSTELLATION MONTHLY

MEME STOCK NO MAS

AST SpaceMobile muscled its way toward the front of the megaconstellation pack in June with a string of market-shifting moves:

- Index Upgrade> ASTS is now set to join the Russell 1000 Index, sliding in among the top 1,000 U.S. public companies by market cap and instantly boosting its visibility with institutional investors managing over $10T.
- L-Band Spectrum Coup> In June, AST announced a $550M deal to bankroll Ligado's $535M Viasat settlement, unlocking rights to up to 45 MHz of L-band spectrum across North America for 80+ years, which is key for DTD scale. Payment starts Sept. 30, 2025.
- BlueBird Block 2 Reveal> AST's new AST5000 ASIC enables Block 2 BlueBird satellites to deliver up to 120 Mbps, with 2,400-square-foot antennas (10x Block 1 capacity, 10,000 MHz bandwidth). Five BlueBirds are on orbit, and AST is planning a future launch cadence of ~4-8 satellites every 1–2 months.
- DoD Demo> AST and longtime partner Fairwinds Technology ran the first tactical Non-Terrestrial Network (NTN) comms demo over standard smartphones — streaming video and voice to a Tactical Assault Kit (TAK) on the ground, via a BlueBird satellite and secured by a VPN. The demo was witnessed by reps from the U.S. Navy, Marines, Army, Space Command, and OUSD R&E. This follows a $43M SDA contract awarded in February 2025 and puts AST in a better position to chase Starlink in the U.S. defense market.
- FCC Push> AST filed with the FCC on June 20 for a constellation expansion, requesting authorization to upsize from 5 to 248 satellites, spanning altitudes from 520 km to 690 km, with coverage cells blanketing 100% of the U.S., using both MNO and MSS spectrum. Earlier in the month, AST urged the Commission to scrap its current obstacle course of regulatory hurdles.
- Global Plays> AST chose Luxembourg to headquarter its "SatCo" JV with Vodafone, established to deliver sovereign DTD to 21 EU member states and other European countries. On June 18, AST inked an MNO partnership with Vi (Vodafone Idea) to target rural India for DTD.
- Balance Sheet Overhaul> In June, AST SpaceMobile retired $225M of its 4.25% convertible notes due in 2032 through private repurchases and raised fresh cash with a direct equity sale. The move cut long-term debt, streamlined the cap table, and freed up capital for the $550M Ligado/Inmarsat L-band spectrum deal.

In a single month, AST SpaceMobile locked in index legitimacy, L-band for decades, Pentagon credibility, global expansion, a path to real commercial service, and the balance sheet to keep it all going. The market may still whipsaw, but AST's fundamentals just had their best month yet.

AMAZON KUIPER'S CLIMB

A ULA Atlas V rocket lifts off from Cape Canaveral on June 23 with Amazon's second Kuiper mission, doubling its broadband satellite fleet to 54. Image Credit: ULA

Amazon's Project Kuiper is finally starting to put some numbers on the scoreboard. On June 23, a ULA Atlas V rocket lofted 27 more operational satellites, doubling the Kuiper fleet to 54. Six more Atlas launches and up to 38 Vulcan missions are next as Amazon hustles to roll out satellite internet service by the end of the year. Meanwhile, Kuiper is busy positioning itself as the alt-Starlink in the EU. Amazon is applying for ground station licenses throughout the continent and has funded a study by Oxford Economics. The study found that Kuiper's European contracts will support an average of 3,270 jobs per year while pumping about €2.8B into the EU's GDP through 2029. France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Spain benefit the most thanks to mega-contracts with Arianespace and Beyond Gravity. Amazon is also trying to please the astronomy community. On June 26, it struck a "good neighbor" deal with the U.S. National Science Foundation, committing Kuiper to minimize its impact on ground-based radio and optical astronomy.

LYNK SPAC SAGA

Slam Corp — the SPAC led by Alex Rodriguez — is suing Lynk Global to block them from bailing on their long-delayed merger. Slam's investors okayed a deadline extension until Christmas, but Lynk insists the deal is toast after June 30.

Slam claims Lynk breached their agreement and is playing hardball. Lynk is firing back, calling the lawsuit "baseless" and promising to countersue. Slam's war chest is all the way down to $23.7M after a flood of shareholder redemptions, so even if the merger somehow survives, it's bringing Monopoly money instead of runway. Both parties were hoping a $110M PIPE would save the day.

Meanwhile, Lynk scored $85M toward a bigger Series B, with SES and Intelsat among its backers — both of whom are having their own M&A moment. New CEO and former Intelsat executive Ramu Potarazu is trying to steer Lynk from science project to actual business by expanding a constellation that, for now, covers only intermittent texting in remote island nations.

QUILTY SPACE

MEGACONSTELLATION MONTHLY

Telesat's LEO 3 demo satellite enabled a breakthrough Q-band (38–39 GHz) link with the UK's RAL Space Chilbolton Observatory, marking the world's first public LEO Q-band demo. This ESA-led project – funded under ARTES and backed by the UK Space Agency —demonstrates Telesat's technical edge and opens up the possibility of higher-frequency operations on its upcoming Lightspeed constellation..

PCMag @PCMag

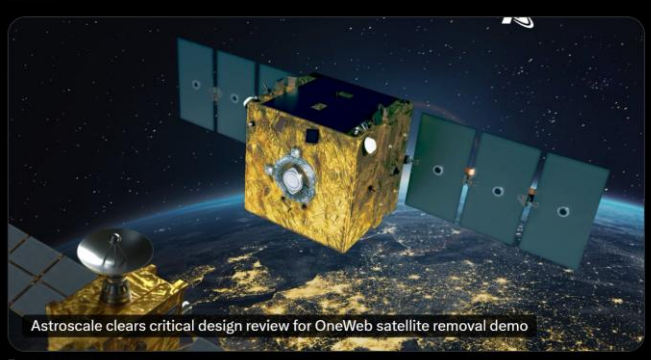
Last year, the FCC rejected SpaceX's request to use the 1.6GHz and 2.4GHz bands currently held by iPhone satellite provider Globalstar. But the regulatory landscape looks a lot different in 2025.

From pcmag.com

1:15 PM · Jun 12, 2025 · **1,082** Views

SpaceNews @SpaceNews_Inc

Astroscale clears critical design review for OneWeb satellite removal demo



From spacenews.com

3:00 AM · Jun 4, 2025 · **4,554** Views

C4ISRNET @C4ISRNET

Sierra Space launches defense-focused business

From c4isrnet.com

1:30 AM · Jun 23, 2025 · **200** Views

Tim Farrar @TMFAssociates

5M terminals manufactured in 11 months, during which period Starlink added ~2.7M customers. That's a lot of churn and terminal upgrades... (and highlights the importance of keeping terminal costs down)

11:54 PM · Jun 13, 2025 · **1,867** Views

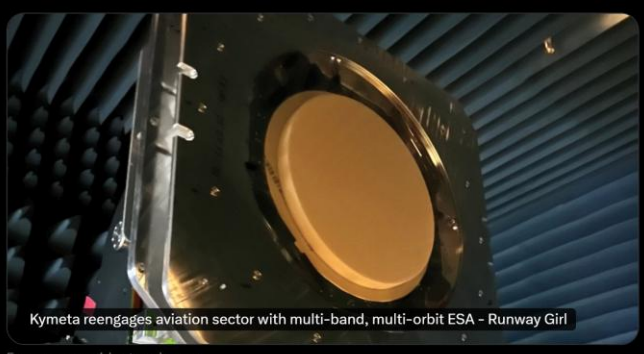
Vodafone Business @VodafoneBiz

We teamed up with @Airbus to launch a new secure communications service across Europe — connecting mobile teams with control rooms in real time. 🔗 Read the article for more: vdfn.biz/7Kt3f1

8:00 AM · Jun 19, 2025 · **117** Views

Runway Girl @RunwayGirl

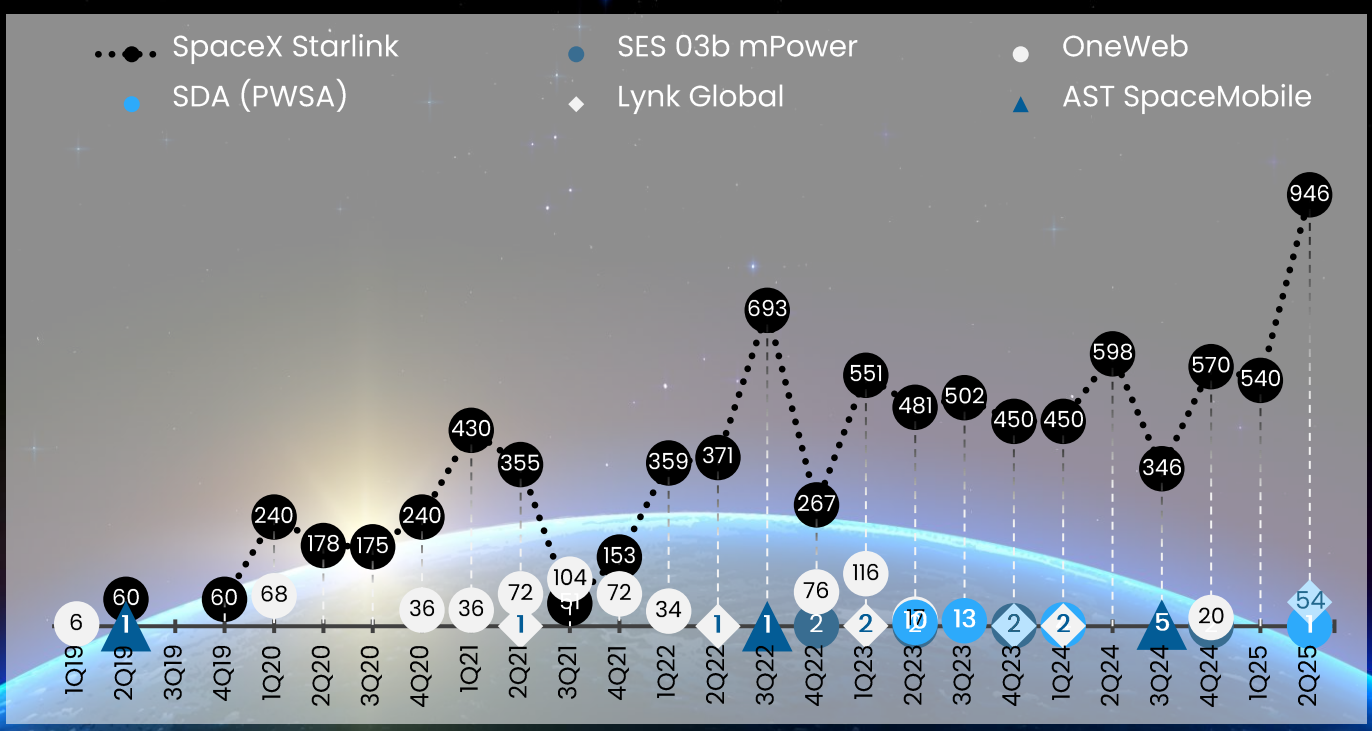
Kymeta reengages aviation sector with multi-band, multi-orbit ESA



From runwaygirlnetwork.com

11:26 AM · Jun 25, 2025 · **1,747** Views

MEGACONSTELLATION TRACKER



Mega Feedback? Email us info@quiltyspace.com