Key Takeaways for "Eyes Wide Open: Harnessing the Remote Sensing and Data Analysis Industries"

The U.S. government has an opportunity to seize strategic advantages by working with the remote sensing and data analysis industries. Both industries grew rapidly over the last decade alongside technology improvements, cheaper space launch, new investment-based business models, and stable regulation. The intelligence community and regulators have recognized these changes and opportunities–more agencies should follow suit. New sensors, like "thermal" infrared, lidar, and hyperspectral, along with new orbits—including atmosphere-grazing very low Earth orbits (VLEO)—offer opportunities for users in the U.S. national security community. Those opportunities attract threats: malicious state actors have threatened to move from reversible jamming to more destructive attacks.

Recommendations:

1. The U.S. government should expand purchases of products and services from commercial remote sensing companies, while partnering with investor capital to encourage commercial remote sensing innovation.

2. The U.S. government should expand purchases from data analysis companies while partnering those companies with multi-disciplinary government test and experimentation teams to maximize the operational relevance of new data sources.

3. The U.S. government broadly, and the Department of Commerce specifically, should maintain current remote sensing regulations allowing commercial sales of world-leading imagery, but also evaluate the application of location-specific controls to protect allies, partners, and U.S. forces in conflict.

4. The U.S. government should continue basic research investments in sensing technology, and expand the technology transfer of those with commercial applications.

5. Within operational plans, the U.S. government should ensure coordinated options are developed and exercised to respond to reversible and irreversible attacks on commercial U.S. satellites.

For more information:

- Download the report: https://cset.georgetown.edu/publication/eyes-wide-open-harnessing-the-remote-sensing-and-data-analysis-industries-to-enhance-national-security/

- Contact us: cset@georgetown.edu