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Headline: Building an Enduring Advantage in the Third Space Age

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Author(s)	Todd Harrison
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Tweet: The US had 81% of global effective launch capacity in 2023, and 78% of satellite launches, largely driven by SpaceX's Starlink constellation. @ToddHarrisonDC

Summary: United States and China both logged their highest launch rate ever in 2023 at 103 and 66 launches, respectively, Russia fell to 19, and Europe recorded just three successful launches for the year. While the number of launches is a useful metric, another way to compare overall launch capabilities among nations is by their effective launch capacity, shown in Figure 3. This is a theoretical measure of the equivalent mass that would have been placed in orbit if each launch vehicle was used to deliver its maximum payload (measured in metric tons) to low Earth orbit (LEO). While the United States accounted for roughly half of global launches in 2023, it made up 81% of effective launch capacity. This is because the Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy—relatively large payload capacity vehicles—comprised the vast majority (93%) of US launches.

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