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Authority NLS 85-35  
By AG, NARS, Date 7-10-85

Dear Mr. President:

In his memorandum of November 28, 1962, the Director of the Bureau of the Budget reports that you desire my views on certain aspects of NASA priorities and budget.

First, as to the matter of relative priorities, I consider that your messages and budget requests have made clear that a broadly based national space program has high priority and should be pursued vigorously. However, it also seems clear that among the various important space projects, the manned lunar landing effort has the highest priority. This has become a clear-cut national objective. You have approved the assignment of a DX rating to Mercury, Saturn, and Apollo, because they represented such critical building blocks in the manned lunar effort.

Consequently, I would conclude that, outside the defense field, the activities related to the lunar project should be considered as having a higher priority than other space projects. In arriving at such a conclusion, however, I do not discount the importance of advanced research, technological development of nuclear rocket engines, and other space activities. Rather, I would simply conclude that, at this time and in this budget year, those admittedly important space projects should not be accorded as high priority as the manned lunar landing program.

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Second, as to the question of a fiscal year 1963 supplemental for the manned lunar landing program, I am advised that such additional funds, if their use were obtained in time, might step up the launch date a few months or at least might give somewhat greater assurance that the target date as scheduled would be met. In my judgment, however, such possibilities do not warrant requesting a supplemental, provided that NASA does obtain for FY 1964 the amount of funds deemed necessary to meet the 1967 target date.

In coming to that conclusion, I have weighed the following factors: (1) Doubt that a supplemental would supply additional funds sufficiently in advance of the passage of the FY 1964 appropriations to make a major difference in schedule attainment; Possible adverse effect upon the FY 1964 request, if pressure is put on to obtain a supplemental for FY 1963; and (3) Question as to whether the Congress would willingly permit NASA to commit funds based upon expectation of future favorable action on the supplemental.

If, of course, it became clear that the manned lunar landing program would suffer seriously in the absence of a supplemental, I would favor it regardless of the opposing arguments. However, I do not believe that such case has been made.

Sincerely,

LBJ

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