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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Over the last decade, the principal goal of our nation's space program has been the Moon. By the end of that decade men from our planet had traveled to the Moon on four occasions and twice they had walked on its surface. With these unforgettable experience, we have gained a new perspective of ourselves and our world.

I believe these accomplishments should help us gain a new perspective of our space program as well. Having completed that long stride into the future which has been our objective for the past decade, we must now define new goals which make sense for the Seventies. We must build on the successes of the past, always reaching out for new achievements. But we must also recognize that many critical problems here on this planet make high priority demands on our attention and our resources. By no means should we allow our space program to stagnate. But -- with the entire future and the entire universe before us -- we should not try to do everything at once. Our approach to space must continue to be bold -- but it must also be balanced.

When this Administration came into office, there were no clear, comprehensive plans for our space program after the first Apollo landing. To help remedy this situation, I established in February of 1969 a Space Task Group, headed by the Vice President, to study possibilities for the future of that program. Their report was presented to me in September. After reviewing that report and considering our national priorities, I have reached a number of conclusions concerning the future pace and direction of the nation's space efforts. The budget recommendations which I have sent to the Congress for Fiscal Year 1971 are based on these conclusions.

Three General Purposes

In my judgment, three general purposes should guide our space program.

One purpose is exploration. From time immemorial, man has insisted on venturing into the unknown despite his inability to predict precisely the value of any given exploration. He has been willing to take risks, willing to be surprised, willing to adapt to new experiences. Man has come to feel that such quests are worthwhile in and of themselves -- for they represent one way in which he expands his vision and expresses the human spirit. A great nation must always be an exploring nation if it wishes to remain great.

A second purpose of our space program is scientific knowledge -- a greater systematic understanding about ourselves and our universe. With each of our space ventures, man's total information about nature has been dramatically expanded; the human race was able to learn more about the Moon and Mars in a few hours last summer than had been learned in all the centuries that had gone before. The people who perform this important work are not only those who walk in spacesuits while millions watch or those who launch powerful rockets in a burst of flame. Much of our scientific progress comes in laboratories and offices, where dedicated, inquiring men and women decipher new facts and add them to old ones in ways which reveal new truths. The abilities of these scientists constitute one of our most valuable national resources. I believe that our space program should help these people in their work and should be attentive to their suggestions.

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A third purpose of the United States space effort is that of practical application -- turning the lessons we learn in space to the early benefit of life on Earth. Examples of such lessons are manifold; they range from new medical insights to new methods of communication, from better weather forecasts to new management techniques and new ways of providing energy. But these lessons will not apply themselves; we must make a concerted effort to see that the results of our space research are used to the maximum advantage of the human community.

A Continuing Process

We must see our space effort, then, not only as an adventure of today but also as an investment in tomorrow. We did not go to the Moon merely for the sport of it. To be sure, those undertakings have provided an exciting adventure for all mankind and we are proud that it was our nation that met this challenge. But the most important thing about man's first footsteps on the Moon is what they promise for the future.

We must realize that space activities will be a part of our lives for the rest of time. We must think of them as part of a continuing process -- one which will go on day in and day out, year in and year out -- and not as a series of separate leaps, each requiring a massive concentration of energy and will and accomplished on a crash timetable. Our space program should not be planned in a rigid manner, decade by decade, but on a continuing flexible basis, one which takes into account our changing needs and our expanding knowledge.

We must also realize that space expenditures must take their proper place within a rigorous system of national priorities. What we do in space from here on in must become a normal and regular part of our national life and must therefore be planned in conjunction with all of the other undertakings which are also important to us. The space budget which I have sent to Congress for Fiscal Year 1971 is lower than the budget for Fiscal Year 1970, a condition which reflects the fiscal constraints under which we presently operate and the competing demands of other programs. I am confident, however, that the funding I have proposed will allow our space program to make steady and impressive progress.

Six Specific Objectives

With these general considerations in mind, I have concluded that our space program should work toward the following specific objectives:

1. We should continue to explore the Moon. Future Apollo manned lunar landings will be spaced so as to maximize our scientific return from each mission, always providing, of course, for the safety of those who undertake these ventures. Our decisions about manned and unmanned lunar voyages beyond the Apollo program will be based on the results of these missions.

2. We should move ahead with bold exploration of the planets and the universe. In the next few years, scientific satellites of many types will be launched into Earth orbit to bring us new information about the universe, the solar system, and even our own planet. During the next decade, we will also launch unmanned spacecraft to all the planets of our solar system, including an unmanned vehicle which will be sent to land on Mars and to investigate its surface. In the late 1970s, the "Grand Tour" missions will study the mysterious outer planets of the solar system -- Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. The positions of the planets at that time will give us a unique opportunity to launch missions which can visit several of them on a single flight of over three billion miles. Preparations for this program will begin in 1972.

There is one major but longer range goal we should keep in mind as we proceed with our exploration of the planets. As a part of this program we will eventually send men to explore the planet Mars.

3. We should work to reduce substantially the cost of space operations. Our present rocket technology will provide a reliable launch capability for some time. But as we build for the longer-range future, we must devise less costly and less complicated ways of transporting payloads into space. Such a capability -- designed so that it will be suitable for a wide range of scientific, defense and commercial uses -- can help us realize important economies in all aspects of our space program. We are currently examining in greater detail the feasibility of re-usable space shuttles as one way of achieving this objective.

4. We should seek to extend man's capability to live and work in space. The Experimental Space Station (XSS) -- a large orbiting workshop -- will be an important part of this effort. We are now building such a station -- using systems originally developed for the Apollo program -- and plan to begin using it for operational missions in the next few years. We expect that men will be working in space for months at a time during the coming decade.

We have much to learn about what man can and cannot do in space. On the basis of our experience with the XSS, we will decide when and how to develop longer-lived space stations. Flexible, long-lived space station modules could provide a multi-purpose space platform for the longer-range future and ultimately become a building block for manned interplanetary travel.

5. We should hasten and expand the practical applications of space technology. The development of earth resources satellites -- platforms which can help in such varied tasks as surveying crops, locating mineral deposits and measuring water resources -- will enable us to assess our environment and use our resources more effectively. We should continue to pursue other applications of space-related technology in a wide variety of fields, including meteorology, communications, navigation, air traffic control, education and national defense. The very act of reaching into space can help man improve the quality of life on Earth.

6. We should encourage greater international cooperation in space. In my address to the United Nations last September, I indicated that the United States will take positive, concrete steps "toward internationalizing man's epic venture into space -- an adventure that belongs not to one nation but to all mankind." I believe that both the adventures and the applications of space missions should be shared by all peoples. Our progress will be faster and our accomplishments will be greater if nations will join together in this effort, both in contributing the resources and in enjoying the benefits. Unmanned scientific payloads from other nations already make use of our space launch capability on a cost-shared basis; we look forward to the day when these arrangements can be extended to larger applications satellites and astronaut crews. The Administrator of NASA recently met with the space authorities of Western Europe, Canada, Japan and Australia in an effort to find ways in which we can cooperate more effectively in space.

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It is important, I believe, that the space program of the United States meet these six objectives. A program which achieves these goals will be a balanced space program, one which will extend our capabilities and knowledge and one which will put our new learning to work for the immediate benefit of all people.

As we enter a new decade, we are conscious of the fact that man is also entering a new historic era. For the first time, he has reached beyond his planet; for the rest of time, we will think of ourselves as men from the planet Earth. It is my hope that as we go forward with our space program, we can plan and work in a way which makes us proud both of the planet from which we come and of our ability to travel beyond it.

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