

**Statement of
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Administrator,
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
before the
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations**

FY 2008 Budget Hearing

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Chairman Mollohan, Ranking Member Frelinghuysen, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today to discuss NASA's \$17.3 billion FY 2008 budget request. This request demonstrates the President's commitment to our Nation's leadership in space exploration, scientific discovery, and aeronautics research, and I ask your support for it.

In Arlington National Cemetery, not far from the memorials to the Space Shuttle *Challenger* and *Columbia* crews, rests the man who a thousand years from now will still be the one who said it best: "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win."

Today, we continue to carry out President Kennedy's legacy in space exploration. He was one of the first of our Nation's leaders to recognize that human spaceflight, as well as the cutting-edge Earth and space science and aeronautics research we do at NASA, are strategic capabilities for this Nation. This *is* rocket science. What we accomplish in space helps to define our country as a world leader, and demonstrates that America continues to be a frontier nation whose future lies in pioneering the space frontier.

While most people are amazed by the many things NASA accomplishes, many people don't realize that our budget is only 0.6% of the entire Federal budget of the United States. As one of the most internationally recognized agencies in the federal government, with enormous name recognition, many people assume NASA's budget is much higher than it actually is. In reality, we have to make some tough choices in the allocation of our scarce resources. We simply cannot do everything that our many constituencies would like us to do. We need to set carefully-considered priorities of time, energy, and resources, and for this, we are guided by the NASA Authorization Act of 2005, our annual appropriations, Presidential policy, and the decadal surveys of the National Academy of Sciences.

NASA's greatest challenge over the next few years is flying the Space Shuttle safely while we use it to assemble the International Space Station. We will then retire the Shuttle in 2010, while bringing our new human spaceflight systems,

the *Orion* Crew Exploration Vehicle and *Ares I* launch vehicle, on-line as soon as possible thereafter. We have also aligned NASA's Aeronautics program with the first-ever Presidential policy on Aeronautics R&D. The goal of this policy is to ensure that NASA and many other agencies of the federal government advance U.S. technological leadership in aeronautics. NASA's Earth and space science missions continue to be world-class; we currently have an armada of over 50 satellites and payloads in orbit today around our Earth, the Sun, and other planets in the solar system. NASA-funded scientists have found over 200 planets orbiting other stars, and data from our satellites have provided the evidence of global warming and the loss of polar ice in recent years. NASA's FY 2008 budget request provides the resources to launch ten new science missions in that year, most of which involve international partners and other U.S. Government agencies including NOAA, the USAF, and the U.S. Geological Survey.

Chairman Mollohan, in two days I plan to deliver to you NASA's operating plan for FY 2007, given the appropriation enacted last month. We are working closely with the White House to make sure that NASA's stakeholders on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue are fully informed of the impact of this appropriation on NASA's program plans. The FY 2007 continuing resolution reduces NASA's overall funding by \$545 million from the President's request for FY07. It further

directs specific reductions to human spaceflight of \$677 million, \$577 million of that from NASA's Exploration Systems.

Budget cuts are a fact of life in public service, but it is my responsibility to keep you informed of their impact upon our multi-year projects and programs. I cannot sugarcoat the issue. The effect of the FY 2007 appropriation is to impose a six-month delay in our ability to bring online NASA's new human spaceflight systems, the *Orion* Crew Exploration Vehicle and *Ares I* Crew Launch Vehicle. Due to the cumulative effect of reductions in Exploration Systems to pay for Space Shuttle Return to Flight costs in FY 2005-06, previously underestimated costs to fly the Space Shuttle until 2010, and the reduction from the FY 2007 request reflected in the FY 2007 Continuing Resolution, based on current budget projections, NASA will not be able to meet the 2014 milestone originally called for when President Bush first announced the Vision for Space Exploration.

I am deeply concerned that the gap between the retirement of the Space Shuttle in 2010 and our new U.S. human spaceflight systems does not grow longer, and I am asking for your help on this point. Full funding of NASA's FY08 Exploration Systems budget request is critical to ensuring the gap between retirement of the Space Shuttle and the new U.S. human spaceflight capability does not grow longer.

Human spaceflight is a strategic capability for our Nation. If the CEV is delayed even further, then our Nation will cede leadership in human spaceflight at a time when Russia and China have such capabilities, and India is developing them.

The cause of space exploration binds many nations together, and today, the United States is a recognized leader because successive Presidents and Congresses worked together in the past to make the right strategic decisions for our Nation's future in space. But our leadership in space and aeronautics is not a birthright; it is not something we can take for granted, it is not an arena in which we can rest on our laurels simply because we have done great things in the past. It is something we must strive to earn every day. We at NASA need the help of the Congress to provide the resources necessary to maintain that leadership.

Chairman Mollohan, I'd like to raise an issue that I've recently spoken about in various speeches to the space community, and I feel compelled to repeat it here because I think it needs a wider audience. I've reached the point where I firmly believe that, if NASA were to disappear tomorrow, if the American space program were to disappear, if we never put another human into space, never put up another Hubble, never sent another spacecraft to another planet, most Americans would be profoundly distraught. We would feel less than ourselves, that our best days were behind us, that the future would be dimmer than the past, that we had let something

important to our Nation simply slip away. It has been almost 35 years since man last set foot on the moon. Some young people today actually question whether we ever really achieved the goal of which President Kennedy so eloquently spoke.

On the day before President Kennedy was assassinated, he spoke at a dedication ceremony in San Antonio, Texas saying: “For more than three years I have spoken about the New Frontier. This is not a partisan term, and it is not the exclusive property of Republicans or Democrats. It refers, instead, to this Nation's place in history, to the fact that we do stand on the edge of a great new era, filled with both crisis and opportunity, an era to be characterized by achievement and by challenge. It is an era which calls for action and for the best efforts of all those who would test the unknown.”

President Kennedy’s challenge to NASA and our Nation continues today. With your help, Mr. Chairman, I hope that we can meet this challenge.

Thank you.