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Washington, DC 20502

FOR RELEASE:
May 7, 2009
12:30 pm Eastern

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U.S. ANNOUNCES REVIEW OF HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT PLANS

INDEPENDENT BLUE-RIBBON PANEL WILL DELINEATE OPTIONS

WASHINGTON – The Obama Administration today announced the launch of an independent review of planned U.S. human space flight activities with the goal of ensuring that the nation is on a vigorous and sustainable path to achieving its boldest aspirations in space. The review will be conducted by a blue-ribbon panel of experts led by Norman Augustine, the former CEO of Lockheed Martin, who served on the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology under Democratic and Republican presidents and led the 1990 Advisory Committee on the Future of the U.S. Space Program and the 2007 National Academies commission that produced the landmark report, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future*, as well as a number of other high-profile national commissions.

The "Review of United States Human Space Flight Plans" is to examine ongoing and planned National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) development activities, as well as potential alternatives, and present options for advancing a safe, innovative, affordable, and sustainable human space flight program in the years following Space Shuttle retirement. The panel will work closely with NASA and will seek input from Congress, the White House, the public, industry, and international partners as it develops its options. It is to present its results in time to support an Administration decision on the way forward by August 2009.

“President Obama recognizes the important role that NASA’s human space flight programs play in advancing scientific discovery, technological innovation, economic strength and international leadership,” said John P. Holdren, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. “The President’s goal is to ensure that these programs remain on a strong and stable footing well into the 21st Century, and this review will be crucial to meeting that goal.”

In a letter to Acting NASA Administrator Christopher Scolese asking him to undertake the review, Holdren noted that it is prudent for the new Administration to obtain a fresh assessment of America's human space flight program given its scale and scope—and especially given its importance for scientific and technological innovation and discovery.

Scolese expressed confidence that the review would serve the nation, NASA, and its employees well. “The thousands of workers who have given so much over the years to bring human space flight to where it is today deserve nothing less than a full assurance that their commitment will be applied in the smartest and most practical ways,” Scolese said. “I appreciate the strong support that the President and Dr. Holdren have for NASA's programs—including our human space flight program—and I look forward to working with Norm, the panel, and the Administration to ensure that NASA remains on the best path as it moves forward.”

Scolese emphasized that work on *Constellation* will continue while the review is underway and that workforce issues will be an important factor assessed by the panel as it considers various options.

The review panel will assess a number of architecture options, taking into account such objectives as: 1) expediting a new U.S. capability to support use of the International Space Station; 2) supporting missions to the Moon and other destinations beyond low Earth orbit; 3) stimulating commercial space flight capabilities; and 4) fitting within the current budget profile for NASA exploration activities. Among the parameters to be considered in the course of its review are crew and mission safety, life-cycle costs, development time, national space industrial base impacts, potential to spur innovation and encourage competition, and the implications and impacts of transitioning from current human space flight systems. The review will consider the appropriate amounts of R&D and complementary robotic activity necessary to support various human space flight activities, as well as the capabilities that are likely to be enabled by each of the potential architectures under consideration. It will also explore options for extending International Space Station operations beyond 2016.

Members of the panel are to be named soon.

“It is an honor to be asked to lead this important human space flight review, and I am excited about working with my fellow panel members to examine these difficult, complex, and pressing questions,” said Augustine, a former aerospace industry executive who is a recipient of the National Medal of Technology, the Joint Chiefs of Staff Distinguished Public Service Award, the Department of Defense's Civilian Distinguished Service Medal, and has served as chairman of the American Red Cross and President of the Boy Scouts of America.

“I am a believer in the value of this nation's human space flight activities,” Augustine said. “And we will do everything we can to provide the information needed to help the country maintain the spectacular arc of progress that NASA has fueled for five decades.”

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