

STATEMENT OF
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Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology
U.S. Human Space Flight Plans Committee
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Carnegie Institution for Science

I want to thank the members of this Committee for the important work you are doing on behalf of our Nation. I also want to thank you for the opportunity to share my views on the human spaceflight-related policies of the NASA Authorization Acts of 2005 and 2008 (P.L. 109-155 and P.L. 110-422 respectively). The views expressed here are primarily mine but I know they are shared by a number of my colleagues.

America must be the Preeminent Space-faring Nation

I think it is important to note that the first Authorization Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-155) was the product of a Republican-led Congress and the second Authorization Act in 2008 (P.L. 110-422) was the product of a Democratically-led Congress. Yet, in both cases the intent was the same, to enable NASA to succeed on its current path toward completion of the International Space Station, utilize the Station to carry out world-class research, retire the Space Shuttle after completing its remaining flights without the constraint of a predetermined date, and develop a new launch system capable of taking humans beyond low-Earth orbit – a feat the shuttle cannot do – for the first time since the 1970s. In both of our Authorizations we allocated more money than the Administration requested because in our opinion NASA was being asked to do too much with too little. I am concerned that we cannot continue to be the preeminent space-faring nation without adequate Administration support and appropriate funding.

One of the most important issues facing NASA, and indeed our nation, is the impending retirement of the Space Shuttle, and the subsequent five year gap in independent U.S. access to the \$100 billion International Space Station. With the NASA Authorization Act of 2005, Congress endorsed the development of the new spacecraft and launch vehicles (and I stress launch vehicles plural) with the goal of launching the new system “as close to 2010 as possible.”

In the NASA Authorization Act of 2008 Congress established the new system as a priority by stating, “Developing United States human spaceflight capabilities to allow independent American access to the International Space Station, and to explore beyond low-Earth orbit, is a *strategically important national imperative* (emphasis added), and all prudent steps should thus be taken to bring the Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle and Ares 1 Crew Launch Vehicle to full operational capability as soon as possible, and to ensure the effective development of a U.S. heavy-lift launch capability for missions beyond low Earth orbit.” As a result, the Act sought to accelerate the development of the new system by authorizing an additional \$1 billion in FY09.

Looking longer term we are very concerned that the current budget request has eliminated funding for the Ares 5 heavy-lift launcher, and the Altair Lunar Lander, without which America is unable to explore beyond low-Earth orbit.

The NASA Authorization Act of 2008 also recognized the Space Shuttle's critical role in completing and utilizing the International Space Station, and added one additional mission, if it could be done safely, to deliver the Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer (AMS). As Authorizers, we are concerned that NASA may be unable to complete the remaining Shuttle missions, including the AMS flight, before the end of 2010. Unless the Administration and the Congress provide funds commensurate with extension, the Agency could be forced to take resources away from the development of Orion and Ares, adding delays that could further jeopardize the 2015 availability, and contribute to further losses of our highly-skilled aerospace workforce.

I, along with many of my colleagues, am not in favor of excessive government spending. But in this time of economic turmoil and growing international technological competitiveness, many of us are in agreement that America's space program is well-established on a path that, if sustained, will ensure our role as the world leader in space exploration and exploitation for decades to come. By pursuing human spaceflight we challenge our industry and inspire America to dream big and succeed. That is what leadership is all about.

Other countries recognize the strategic importance of the soft power we gained in the world through our audacious leadership in human space flight. The political and technological stature America has earned through our space program is now sought by other nations eager to demonstrate their hard-won capabilities to the world. The International Space Station in orbit today is a remarkable achievement, bringing together the scientific and engineering talents, and resources of many nations. That achievement would not have been possible without American leadership. But such leadership is built on trust that we will keep our commitments to our international partners. If we continue to under-fund our space program we risk losing the international trust and credibility that is vital for long term success.

Today, nearly 70 percent of the world's population was not alive to see Neil Armstrong walk on the Moon. Their opinions will be shaped by what happens in the future, not what happened in the past. We should not be in a race with China or any other country. We are the preeminent leader in space. But leadership is temporary. We should ensure that we take the necessary actions to remain the leader in human space flight.

I want to thank the committee once again for this opportunity to share our minority views.