

**EMPHASIZING THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA
IN U.S. CIVIL SPACE POLICY**

Testimony to

**Subcommittee on Space Science and Applications
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives**

February 9, 1989

On the results of a December 8-10, 1988 workshop organized by The Planetary Society and the Space Policy Institute, The George Washington University.

**Testimony Presented By:
Dr. John McLucas, Workshop Chairman and
Chairman of the Board, Questech, Inc.,
Accompanied by Dr. John Logsdon,
Director, Space Policy Institute and
Advisor, The Planetary Society**

EMPHASIZING THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA IN U.S. CIVIL SPACE POLICY

On December 8-10, 1988, some 35 leaders and specialists experienced in space policy from the United States, Canada, France, Germany and the European Space Agency met in Washington, D.C., to discuss "developing the international agenda for space exploration". The meeting was organized by the Space Policy Institute of The George Washington University and The Planetary Society. An agenda for the meeting and a list of participants is attached.

This group of experts reached one clear consensus: SPACE INITIATIVES THAT INVOLVE SUBSTANTIAL INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION CAN FURTHER MAJOR U.S. SECURITY, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS AND ARE NEEDED TO RESPOND TO TWO IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES TO THIS COUNTRY.

This first challenge is the rapid, potentially disastrous changes to the global environment caused by growing human activity on Earth. Space-borne instruments, Earth-based observations and studies of other Earth-like planets are crucial for a focused program now labeled "Mission to Planet Earth." This mission should be international in conduct and content, and deserves high national priority.

The second challenge is the effective and innovative Soviet initiative to build international relationships in highly visible programs of space exploration and so demonstrate the U.S.S.R.'s technical prowess and new international openness. With its Eastern and Western European partners the Soviet Union flew by Halley's Comet, deposited balloon payloads in the atmosphere of Venus, and is sending a spacecraft to explore Mars and its asteroid-like moon Phobos. The Soviets have in essence established a permanent presence of humans in Earth orbit, and continue to push back the frontiers of long-duration human flight. Future Soviet plans make international involvement in U.S.S.R. science missions a high priority objective. Their initiative, enhanced by the new atmosphere of glasnost, is focused on Western Europe and the United States, but includes Japan, Canada, Europe, South Asia and Latin America.

So far the United States has responded guardedly to Soviet overtures, while traditional U.S. allies are entering into new relationships with the U.S.S.R. It is in the interests of the United States to regain its prominence in international space science and exploration, thereby influencing the future direction of the world's space activities and reaping the many benefits of international cooperation.

In order to do this, the United States needs to build upon three decades of cooperative experience with its traditional partners, and particularly upon the recently created space station partnership with Europe, Japan, and Canada. Meeting participants agreed that all spacefaring countries--the United States, the Soviet Union, Europe, Japan, Canada, and other nations--should be involved in planning and

interests and objectives, both around the world and at home, strong presidential leadership is required. That leadership is needed to focus current U.S. space activities and is more essential to their policy effectiveness than are increased budgets, altered institutional arrangements, or new international structures--all of which, however, will be needed.

The President-elect has already endorsed a Mission to Planet Earth, the purpose of which is to provide vital information for policy decisions affecting all aspects of the world environment and economy and the health of its citizens. But a U.S. initiative is needed to make that program international. An international Mission to Planet Earth would begin with coordination of operations and data collection for the more than two dozen existing and scheduled Earth observing spacecraft of many nations. The mission would expand to include polar platforms contributed by the the United States, Europe and Japan, and potentially the Soviet Union. Early in the 21st century, it could encompass coordination of geostationary spacecraft of the major space powers.

An important first step was taken when a NASA-promoted space agency coordinating committee for the 1992 International Space Year (ISY) adopted the Mission to Planet Earth as a primary ISY objective. In this and other forums the United States can more effectively encourage the Soviet Union to respond with specifics regarding its participation. The roles of Europe, Japan and other spacefaring nations, the participation of developing countries, and the need for altered or new international mechanisms could be identified in the context of an enlightened global initiative related to Mission to Planet Earth.

The ability of the United States both to take an active stance in responding to Soviet space science initiatives and to indicate future directions for the alliance-based space station partnership is limited by the lack of an exploratory goal that provides a cohesive focus for American efforts in space. A broad array of groups studying the U.S. civil space program have concluded that its single biggest deficiency is the lack of a coherent exploratory goal. Expanding human activity and presence beyond Earth orbit was added as a long-term objective of U.S. space policy earlier this year, but no compelling goal nor specific objectives have yet been enunciated to carry out that policy. The Republican party, in its 1988 platform, recommended that a "resurgent America, renewed economically and in spirit, must get on with its business of greatness. We must commit to a manned flight to Mars around the year 2000 and to continue exploration of the moon." All at the meeting agreed that Mars was the long-term goal for human exploration, although a specific strategy for getting there was not discussed.

However, there was a consensus on the need to link current U.S.-Soviet interactions regarding solar system exploration with interactions with U.S. allies. Two related White House actions seem

required. One is to broaden the scope of current U.S.-Soviet cooperation to allow the conduct of joint studies and the consideration of more ambitious, collaborative missions, both automated and ultimately with human crews. The other is to imbed these bilateral discussions and studies in a broader multilateral context. This would build on the space station partnership and thus engage other spacefaring countries as well as the United States and the Soviet Union in defining the directions for space exploration in the early 21st century.

If there was one message that came from most participants in the meeting, it was the need to begin discussing multilateral partnerships in complex space undertakings as soon as possible. All countries are experienced enough to recognize that exploratory discussions of potential collaboration on future missions do not constitute on any side a commitment to either collaboration or to particular missions. But issues such as matching expectations, roles, and contributions in major projects; making national commitments on different time frames and through different political and budgetary processes; and developing a rational and consistent approach to questions of technology transfer can only be addressed on the basis of extended, frank discussions among potential partners. These discussions should not be only at the technical level; involvement by political officials at an early stage is essential. Many participants suggested that the international regime for Antarctic activities was a particularly useful model in developing a multilateral approach to human exploration of the solar system.

Based on the above considerations, the organizers of the meeting--that is, The Planetary Society and the Space Policy Institute of The George Washington University--put forth the following recommendations:

1. the United States should intensify its leadership effort to make Mission to Planet Earth a truly global undertaking. A presidential endorsement and active presidential support for this effort would greatly facilitate its success;
2. the U.S.-U.S.S.R. space cooperation agreement of April 1987 should be amended to allow for the conduct of joint studies of solar system exploration missions and possible future multilateral missions; and
3. the United States should take the initiative in organizing a multilateral U.S.-U.S.S.R.-Europe-Japan solar system exploration working group. This group would consider the most appropriate steps in a multi-decade enterprise of robotic and human exploration and expansion beyond Earth orbit and identify the synergistic roles that the major spacefaring countries, and eventually others of the world's nations, might play in that enterprise.