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Space Exploration Day, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Space exploration is a quest for knowledge—knowledge about what lies outside the confines of the Earth's atmosphere and knowledge about the Earth itself. The information obtained adds greatly to the accumulated wisdom of mankind necessary for an understanding of the fundamental processes and origins of life, providing insight into perplexing mysteries of the universe. Because space has no boundaries, the information and benefits from space exploration accrue to mankind's advantage in many different spheres.

For 25 years, since the first primitive spacecraft heralded the dawn of the Space Age, the United States has expanded the frontier of space research; and the fruits of this research have been shared with scientists of other countries, reflecting the peaceful nature of our exploration. For example, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has sent remotely controlled satellites on missions to measure the winds of Mars, count the rings of Saturn, and record volcanic activity on a moon of Jupiter; weather satellites have intensely studied the Earth's weather patterns; and communications satellites have profoundly changed modern life as events and impacts are known instantly and felt worldwide. Near-earth satellites inventory our agricultural resources, search for mineral deposits, and measure the ecological impact of forest fires and volcanic eruptions. New products for industry, home, and medical use also have moved into the private sector.

As we have employed unmanned satellites to conduct research in space, we have also utilized the presence of man. Fifteen years ago, on July 20, 1969, people around the world witnessed the wonder of a human voice being transmitted from Tranquility Base:

"That's one small step for Man . . .

One giant leap for Mankind."

as an American astronaut became the first human to set foot on truly foreign soil—the Moon. The Apollo project evinced our technological leadership and preeminence in space.

The success of America's Space Shuttle, the most sophisticated space research vehicle yet developed, reaffirms the spirit of confidence, courage, pride, ingenuity, and determination which has characterized the history of America's space program. As the Shuttle continues to demonstrate and expand its capabilities, and as we progress towards a permanently manned space station, the spirit of July 20, 1969, burns brilliantly, leading our journey into the future.

Space exploration is part of the human adventure. Through it, we challenge ourselves to strive and to achieve. By exploring, we are not just finding out more about our physical environment, we are finding out more about the human condition.

It is said there are two fundamental differences between human beings and other species: we have souls and we have curiosity. The exploration of space is a testament to each of these differences. It is our curiosity which drives our explorations, and it is our soul which gives these explorations meaning.

In recognition of the achievements and promise of our space exploration program, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution 555, has designated July 20, 1984, as "Space Exploration Day" and authorized and requested the President to issue a Proclamation to commemorate this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim July 20, 1984, as Space Exploration Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe the occasion with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 20th day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

Ronald Reagan