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Space Exploration Day, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Sixteen years ago, on July 20, 1969, American Astronauts sent a message to Earth: "The Eagle has landed." In a dramatic and compelling moment in history, the first humans had reached solid ground beyond our own planet.

To understand Earth systems we must understand our solar system and the universe beyond. Remotely controlled satellites have been sent on missions to Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter. If all goes well, the outer planets Uranus and Neptune will be studied as the Voyager spacecraft passes by in 1986 and 1989, respectively. Within the next year or so the first comet rendezvous are planned (Giacobini-Zinner and Halley), the powerful Hubble Space Telescope will be placed in orbit, and the Galileo Mission to Jupiter will be launched. Scientists around the world eagerly anticipate the results.

The space shuttle continues to demonstrate and expand its capabilities with each successive flight. Within the past year, satellites have been launched from the shuttle's bay, repaired in space, and retrieved and returned to Earth for repair. We have conducted missions in which a European-designed and built scientific laboratory—Spacelab—has flown in the shuttle bay's gravity-free environment during which data in a wide range of disciplines have been acquired, materials tested, and chemical reactions monitored.

Under NASA's direction, the next logical step in America's space program—the space station—is being planned, with development scheduled for the latter part of this decade. When it becomes operational in the early to mid-1990s, the space station will be a catalyst for expanding the peaceful uses of space for scientific, industrial, and commercial gain. The station will serve as a laboratory for materials processing and industrial and scientific research; as a permanent observatory for astronomy and Earth observations; as a storage and supply depot; and as a base from which to service other satellites or satellite clusters that will form the world's first space-based industrial park. Japan, Europe, and Canada have joined with us in partnerships that are designed to serve all our long-term interests.

Space exploration is little more than a quarter century old. In that brief period, more has been learned about the cosmos and our relation to it than in all the preceding centuries combined. The ever-increasing knowledge gained from peaceful space exploration, and the uses to which that knowledge is put, potentially benefit all those aboard Spaceship Earth. The spirit of July 20, 1969, lives on.

In recognition of the achievements and promise of our space exploration program, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 154, has designated July 20, 1985, 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, 1985, 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 twentieth day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan