

TEXT OF THE REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE NASA MANNED SPACE FLIGHT CENTER  
HOUSTON, TEXAS  
MARCH 1, 1968

This is my first visit to this great center in many months. I assure you that Jim Webb keeps me fully informed about your progress and your problems and your needs.

I have great faith in Jim Webb, Dr. Gilruth, and their associates. I believe what they tell me. But every now and then I like to see for myself. That is one reason why I am here today.

But I had another reason. And that was to tell you, on behalf of all your countrymen who cannot be here themselves, how deeply we appreciate the great work you are carrying forward.

Your inventiveness and your own high standards are raising American industry to ever-higher levels of technological perfection. Our store of knowledge has grown richer with the success of our Ranger and Surveyor and Orbiter spacecraft.

I predict that, ten years from now, some other President will stand here and congratulate the people of this center for their amazing achievements. And he will see them at work in a giant station in space – at work assessing the exact status and value of wheat and rice as they are growing all over the earth.

He will see them predicting with phenomenal accuracy the amount of water available to each farmer for growing next year's crop.

He will see them controlling thousands of peaceful air and space vehicles at work for mankind in all regions of the earth.

He will see them developing a world-wide overview of all our cities – an overview that can be used by scientists and engineers to guide new economic and political institutions in every region of the earth.

Political scientists and social scientists – as well as physical scientists, engineers, and administrators – will then know, through work at this center, more than our generation can ever know about the causes of pollution – about the use of recreational areas – all the knowledge mankind needs if we are to continue our steady advance toward a great destiny.

Messages and pictures coming into this center will show the President, standing here ten years from now, what astronomers are observing from the back side of the moon; or what machines are doing for mankind on our sister planets of Venus and Mars; or what massive energy from an eruption on the sun is starting its journey to affect human beings all over this planet Earth.

We have invested many billions of dollars during the past ten years in our efforts in space. But the true value to our nation of this investment and all the work you are doing here is beyond calculation. I am certain that, as future generations look back on our incredible decade, they will

be unanimous in their belief that the treasure we have dedicated to sending man to explore the stars was the most significant investment ever made by any people.

Two months ago, when I visited your colleagues in New Orleans, I said this: “We are all the descendants of those voyagers who found and settled the New World.”

“Today we stand here at the gateway to another and a more glorious New World.”

“We will not surrender our station. We will not abandon our dream. We will never evacuate the frontiers of space to any other nation.”

I repeat that pledge and that purpose to you here today.

We are close to a landing on the moon. Our space programs for the decade of the Sixties are drawing to a close. Yet a mighty intellectual and technological effort, such as you are engaged in here, cannot just be turned on and off. We must stay the course. We must continue to build new strength by using the strength we have. We must continue to cross over new frontiers. This will certainly be our certain course in the next decade.

As a further step toward joining hands with the world’s scientific community, I want to announce that we will build facilities here in this great space capital of Houston to help the world’s scientists work closer together more effectively on the problems of space. We are going to establish here in Houston a new Lunar Science Institute along the side of this great center which you have here. It will be initially be operated by the National Academy of Sciences and Rice University.

We hope and expect that universities from all parts of the nation will join with them.

The new institute is a center of research designed specifically for the age of space. Here will come scientists – and their students – from all over the world.

We will welcome here all who are interested in the sciences of space. We will strengthen the cooperation between NASA and our universities. And we will set new patterns of scientific cooperation which will have profound effects on man’s knowledge of his universe.

This new Lunar Science Institute will provide new means of communication and research for the world’s scientific community. It will help unite the nations for the great challenge of space.

Let this great new institute stand as a symbol. Let it show the world that we do not build rockets and spacecraft to fly our flag in space, or to plant our banner on the surface of the moon.

We work to give all mankind its last great heritage. We are reaching for the stars. You are the pioneers and I want to congratulate you for what you are doing, and are about to do, in this great human adventure.