

The original documents are located in Box 36, “7/20/76 - Talking Points for Telephone Conversation with Viking Mission Control Center Upon Successful Landing of the Viking Spacecraft (Includes draft)” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

TALKING POINTS FOR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

WITH VIKING MISSION CONTROL CENTER

JULY 20, 1976

-- I congratulate you, Dr. Fletcher, as Administrator of NASA,
and Viking Project Coordinator James Martin, for the remarkable
success of this historic mission.

-- I also ~~congratulate~~ ^{thank} the thousands of dedicated scientists,
technicians, and other NASA personnel involved across the country --
as well as those from universities and private industry who gave
invaluable assistance.

-- It is amazing to think that in the span of a single lifetime
the exploration of air and space has grown from the ~~efforts~~ ^{dreams} of a few
individuals, to such a massive cooperative ~~efforts~~ ^{reality}

-- We have gone from flights of a few seconds and a few hundred
feet, to a year-long journey to Mars crossing 440 million miles.

unfortunately

unfortunately

1 -- Your search for a safe landing site forced you to delay

the Viking's landing beyond the scheduled July 4th date. But by an

extraordinary coincidence, today is another historic anniversary.

Seven years ago, on July 20, 1969, we received the transmission

from the moon telling us -- "The Eagle has landed."

-- Today's landing, like that one, represents the realization

of a dream that is centuries old. In a sense it is even more

significant, for today we are touching another planet -- one that has

long excited mankind's imagination. And this mission offers the

possibility of a momentous discovery in the history of mankind --

the existence of life elsewhere in the Universe.

-- ~~Even~~ if the experiments of Vikings I and II do not reveal

living organisms, they will ^{learn} ~~show~~ us other secrets of the Universe.

They will tell us things about our own planet -- open up new possibilities

for exploration -- and ^{should} ~~may~~ produce knowledge that will improve the

quality of life here on Earth.

-- Our achievements in space represent not only the height of technological skill. They also reflect the best in the American character -- the capacity for creativity and sacrifice, and a willingness to reach into the unknown.

-- That is why I have designated today, July 20, 1976, as Space Exploration Day. I encourage all Americans to follow the progress of our Viking missions, and to reflect on our journey into the unknown.

Jim Dethlefs
Jim Martin
Let me ask you a few questions:

-- As far as you can tell, what kind of shape is the spacecraft in?

-- What kind of pictures can we expect to see? If the cameras catch something moving, how will it appear?

-- If nothing immediately appears to be alive, how long might it take before you will be able to evaluate the evidence from your experiments?

-- Do all the spectrometers (spek-TRAH-mitt-ers)--

the "cookers" -- appear to be working, or did we lose one going
through the Galactic Ghoul?

-- If Viking I doesn't find any signs of life, what about Viking II
next fall?

-- Even if no signs of life are detected, what are some of
the things you have learned and hope to learn from Viking?

END OF TEXT

NOT USED

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

ALTERNATE -- TALKING POINTS FOR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH VIKING MISSION CONTROL CENTER FOLLOWING UNSUCCESSFUL LANDING

-- I am sorry to learn that the landing portion of the Viking mission has not been achieved. I know this must be a disappointment for you, but I am confident that what you have learned from tracking and guiding Viking I will help ensure a safe landing for Viking II this fall.

-- I congratulate you, Dr. Fletcher, as Administrator of NASA, and Viking Project Coordinator James Martin, for what has already been achieved in this remarkable mission.

-- I also congratulate the thousands of dedicated scientists, technicians, and other NASA personnel involved across the country -- as well as those from universities and private industry who gave invaluable assistance.

-- Our achievements in space represent not only the height of technological skill. They also reflect the best in the American character -- the capacity for creativity and sacrifice, and a willingness to reach into the unknown.

-- That is why I have designated today, July 20, 1976,

as Space Exploration Day. I encourage all Americans to follow the progress of Viking II, to learn about our space efforts, and to reflect on our journey into the unknown.

-- We have had some bad luck this morning, but it is less significant than the successes we have seen in space exploration over a few short years. Americans are proud of what we have accomplished. We look forward to the safe landing of Viking II.

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