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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL GODDARD TROPHY
TO THE SKYLAB ASTRONAUTS

THE CABINET ROOM

12:30 P.M. EDT

Let me say it is a great honor to participate in the award on behalf of the National Space Club. The Robert Goddard Award, of course, everybody knows, is the ultimate in recognition for great achievements in the field of space.

I looked over the list of previous recipients, and it is a superb group of individuals, individuals who have contributed most significantly over a long, long period of time, relatively speaking, to the success of our space program.

I can recall very vividly when the first vehicle was put in space -- not by us, but by one of our competitors -- and I can recall very vividly the relatively small part that I played thereafter as a member of the Select Committee, Congressman Teague, in putting together the new organization, which we know now as NASA.

As a result of the reorganization of NASA and the excellent leadership that followed by the space committees and NASA itself, the United States has achieved a great role in space.

The Skylab is a great accomplishment, and it has proved, as all of you know, a number of things; first, that man can live in space 84 days, preceded, of course, by two other missions that went from 22 to 54 days.

In addition to proving that man can live in space, it brought back, through the three missions, information that is invaluable. We know a great deal more about space as a result.

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(OVER)

We have continued the great thrust of our space program, and I wish to congratulate the leader of the third mission, congratulate him and in turn congratulate the other eight individuals who participated in these three historic missions.

I am glad to report that through Jim Fletcher's strong plea we have funded the space program reasonably generously. Let me say that we will help in every way we can to convince the Congress that they ought to keep it at that level.

Because of my experience both on the Select Committee that had some part in launching our space program, and through my experiences, as Tiger Teague knows, on the Defense Appropriations Committee where we did a good bit of funding for our related military operations, I am a complete believer in the accomplishments -- the mission -- of a good, fine, forward looking visionary space program for America.

I am delighted to congratulate you, Colonel Carr, and let me read the citation as a part of the award given by the National Space Club here. The citation reads as follows:

"The Robert H. Goddard Memorial Trophy is presented to the nine Skylab astronauts for their exceptional accomplishments in the Skylab program. They demonstrated that man can live in space for an extended period. They established beyond question the pre-eminence of the United States in space exploration."

It is a great tribute to the nine who have participated. It is a great tribute to the people in NASA. It is a tribute, I think, to the Congress and Administration, and Executive Branch, and it is basically a reward for the faith that the American people have had in what we have to do in looking skyward, down the road, for a bigger and better world in which we can all live.

Congratulations.

END (AT 12:37 P.M. EDT)