

July 15, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

TEXT OF A MESSAGE BY THE PRESIDENT
TO US ASTRONAUTS AND SOVIET COSMONAUTS
PRIOR TO THE LAUNCHING OF THEIR SPACECRAFTS

To the Soyuz and Apollo Crews:

In a few short hours, you will be opening a new era in the exploration of space. Although other's have gone before you, you will be blazing a new trail of international space cooperation. Never before have representatives of two countries lived and worked together in space. It is an historic occasion. I know you are proud to be playing such an important part in it.

As you make your final preparations for launching, I cannot help but think how far we have gone in space in such a short period of time. Less than two decades ago, Huriy Gagarin and then John Glenn orbited the earth, realizing the dreams of Taiolkovsky, Goddard and others who believed firmly that man could fly in space. Six years ago next Sunday, Apollo 11 brought the first men to the moon. This mission was followed by that of the Soviet automatic vehicle LUNOKHOD. Both brought back samples of the moon's surface, as a result of which our knowledge of earth's closest neighbor has expanded considerably.

Your flight represents another stage in man's efforts to further his understanding of his environment. It has already demonstrated something else -- that the United States and the Soviet Union can cooperate in such an important endeavor. Since the Apollo-Soyuz project was agreed to three years ago, crews, scientists and specialists of both countries have worked diligently and productively, and in a spirit of cooperation, to bring us to where we are today. I am heartened by the example of dedication and cooperation you have displayed. I am confident your efforts and example will lead to further cooperation between our two countries.

The peoples of the world will be following your flight and epic joint mission with interest and enthusiasm. On behalf of the American people, I commend you for your courage and vision and wish you Godspeed and good luck.

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