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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
AWARDS CEREMONY  
FOR APOLLO-SOYUZ ASTRONAUTS

THE ROSE GARDEN

AT 12:02 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say how happy and pleased I am to be here today and to participate in this ceremony.

We honor three men who have risen 137 miles above this earth, looked down at all the turmoil, the pollution, the confusion and the problems and still decided to come back. (Laughter)

I think it gives all of us, the rest of us some hope.

We also honor the Project Director who, along with thousands of unsung but far from unappreciated members of the NASA space team, has made this trip possible. And we thank them as well as the others.

I think you all have the gratitude and the admiration of all Americans, some 214 million. I think the entire world shared, as I did, in the excitement and in the achievement of the Apollo-Soyuz mission. It was a great triumph of science and technology but it was also something more. The Apollo-Soyuz flight was an encouraging reminder in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, men from different countries and different systems can work together for a common goal with courage, intelligence and success.

Although this wonderful lesson was learned nearly 140 miles from earth, it is one that can make a great contribution to a better and more peaceful planet in the years ahead. If we can bring the spirit of Apollo-Soyuz to bear on the many, many challenges that mankind faces on earth, the future of us here will be far, far brighter.

Along these lines, I am pleased about the plans for the Apollo and Soyuz crew members and their families to tour the United States and the Soviet Union together. You will enjoy meeting the people in both countries who followed your great scientific undertaking over television and who prayed for your success and your safe return. Today I am extremely happy and very pleased to present to the three Apollo astronauts and the Project Director who headed the vast support operations here on earth, as a small token of our country's gratitude and respect, the NASA Distinguished Service Medal.

It is a very high honor for me to award this medal to four gallant men who have made us all very, very proud to be Americans. So at this time it will be my pleasure to present to Tom Stafford, Deke Slayton, Vance Brand and Dr. Glynn Lunney with the NASA Distinguished Service Medal.

MORE

COMMANDER COATES: "Citation to accompany the NASA Award Distinguished Service Medal to the Apollo-Soyuz astronauts and project Director for their outstanding performance during the Apollo-Soyuz space flight, the first international manned space mission. Through their efforts, it was possible to carry out a significant cooperative venture with the Soviet Union in a space flight that successfully demonstrated joint orbital operations and tested a universe docking system. This opened the way for mutual assistance in the exploration of the universe.

Signed and sealed at Washington, D.C., this 9th Day of August, 1975, Gerald R. Ford, President of the United States. Brigadier General Thomas Stafford, Mr. Vance Brand, Mr. Donald Slayton, Dr. Glynn Lunney.

MR. BRAND: Mr. President, throughout your years in Congress, your leadership there, your great support of man's exploration of space, your Presidency, we wanted to have a token present to give to you from man's first international mission, so the crew chose your Presidential flag, and on behalf of the crew, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and all the people here, this is for you, sir, Your flag was flown on the space mission.

PRESIDENT FORD: Thank you very, very much.

How many million miles did it fly, about three million miles?

I do want to thank all three of you as well as Glynn and the people that were associated with the operation. This will mean a great deal to me, to the White House and to the American people, and I thank you very, very much.

We will appropriately hang it in the Oval Office some place.

Thank you all very much for your participation in one of the finest, I think, best things that has happened not only to the United States, but the world.

I congratulate again not only the three astronauts but those associated with them. It made me very proud, as I know it made 214 million Americans very proud of not only them but their scientific backup and what it meant, I think, on a broader sense to the world as a whole.

Thank you very, very much.

END

(AT 12:12 P.M. EDT)