

Is President Kennedy's Man-to-Moon Project Costly Boondoggle?

BY HENRY KEYS

United Press International

Washington—President Kennedy's multi-billion dollar Apollo man-to-the moon project has become enmeshed in controversy which adds up to this:

Is it a costly boondoggle that is syphoning off scientific manpower and dollars that should be devoted to bettering the American way of life?

Or is it as vital to the nation's welfare as the wartime Manhattan project that brought the atomic bomb and harnessed the nuclear energy into being?

The scientific community is divided. So are the politicians, some of whom shudder at the expense. But not so the President, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and professional military men who think the nation should have dominance in space, cost what it may.

Much-Debated Issue

The much-debated issue has been brought into sharp focus because it is budget appropriation time at the Capitol. Kennedy and NASA have asked Congress for a whopping \$5.7 billion for space in the next fiscal year.

This is \$2 billion more than voted last year. And that is precisely why the world is hearing so much about the expensive American race to beat Russia to the moon.

Many scientists oppose the Apollo project because they don't see it as a scientific venture. They argue that it is 99 per cent engineering and technology and only 1 per cent science.

Top officials of NASA agree. They never have argued that it was a strictly scientific project. Thus the issue in debate boils down to the simple question: Does the United States want to win the race to the moon or not?

President Kennedy says it does and must. Congress last year and the year before heartily agreed and millions of ordinary Americans concurred.

Taking Long Hard Look

Today, however, Congressional Republicans are taking a long, hard look at it and are determined to try and cut it back.

House GOP whip Leslie Arends, Ill., put it this way after the Senate Republican policy Committee assailed the program:

"We are not questioning the value of placing a man on the moon. We are simply questioning the wisdom of spending so much in dollars and precious scientific manpower in trying to be first. The best scientific minds of other nations are concentrating on developing and improving products and methods of production. While getting first to the moon, we may one day find ourselves a poor second in other areas of human endeavor."

Sen. Clinton P. Anderson, D-N.M., chairman of the Senate Space committee, delivered a lengthy rebuttal on the Senate floor. He said there was no certainty that critics who would slash billions from the program "would not then vote against social welfare legislation." And to GOP charges that the program is merely a headline grabbing exercise, he warned that a slowdown "would certainly afford great comfort to our enemies and spread dismay among our friends overseas."

Summarized in Editorial

The scientific arguments were summarized in an editorial in "Science," official journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. As such, its credentials as spokesman for thousands of scientists may be regarded as beyond challenge.

It said, in part: "The nation may sustain the continuing burden of the program principally because of man's spirit of adventure—his desire to conquer the inanimate. An earlier generation was excited about reaching the North Pole."

"The lasting propaganda value of placing a man on the moon has been vastly overestimated. The first lunar landing will be a great occasion; subsequent boredom is inevitable. Interest in lunar exploration will be sustained only if there are important military implica-

tions, exciting scientific accomplishments or technological fallout.

"Military applications seem remote. "NASA has sought examples of technological fallout from its program. To date, those cited have not been impressive . . . not more than a small fraction of the cost of the moon program will be recovered through technological fallout."

"The scientific exploration of the moon has been accorded a secondary priority in the lunar program."

The editorial carried the initials of the editor of Science, Philip A. Abelson, director of the geophysical laboratory, Carnegie Institution, Washington, who is well known to scientists around the world.

On the political front, critics have gained strong support from former President Eisenhower. He declared that Congress would be guilty of "fiscal recklessness" unless it performed major surgery on NASA's budget. He added that "enormous sums" were being wasted and that the space program in general was "downright spongy."

Not Worth Added Burden

"I have never believed that a spectacular dash to the moon, vastly deepening our national debt, is worth the added tax burden it will eventually impose upon our citizens," Eisenhower said. He argued further that the moon flight should stem from "a natural growth of demonstrably valuable space operations, not a crash program."

In October, 1957, Eisenhower told a news conference that Ruman Sputnik No. 1 had not raised his concern over U.S. security "one iota."

President Kennedy frequently takes public note of this in blaming his predecessor for Russia's lead in the space race.

One of the most trenchant critics is the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, Sen. J. William Fulbright, D-Ark.

Not As Important

"The U.S.-Soviet race for the moon," he said recently, "is not as important as developing the human and physical resources of our people and cleaning up the slums . . ."

"It is strange that in a world which bears an intolerable burden of hunger, disease, poverty and animosity among its peoples, we should devote so many of the best minds of both the Western and Communist worlds to achieving a landing on the moon, where, to my knowledge, no solutions to our problems await us."

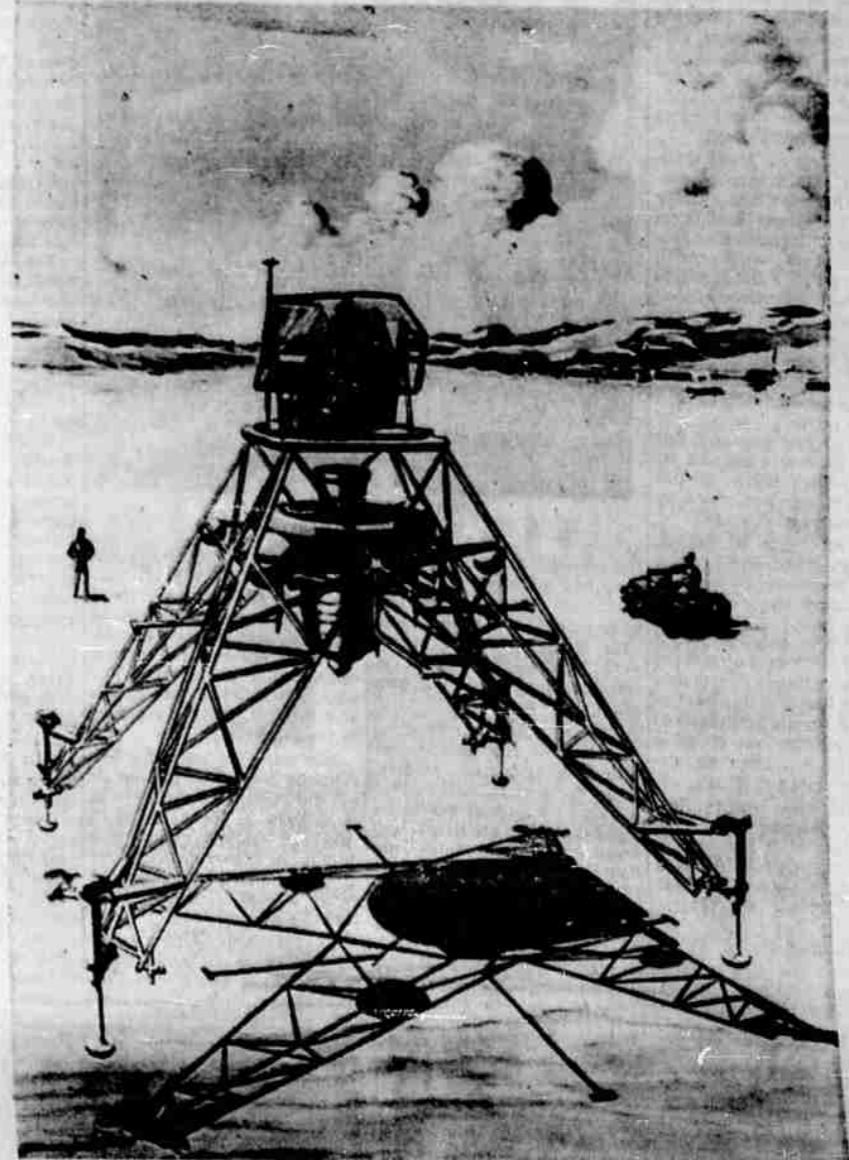
Here is some more of the debate:

Ralph J. Bunche, United Nations undersecretary and a Nobel Prize winner: "There is less justification for conducting such efforts as a space race when there is a crying need for the intensive application of science and funds to problems like food and water supply, overpopulation, mental health and control of cancer and heart disease."

Nuclear scientist Linus Pauling: "While it will contribute something in the way of scientific discovery, the contribution will be very small to putting that money into several other fields such as medical research or other basic research . . . or in using the funds in underdeveloped countries."

Dr. Lee A. DuBridge of California Institute of Technology, a firm supporter of the program but who nevertheless has reservations: "It is one of the great scientific enterprises of all time. Its impact on the future of the world and mankind is simply beyond calculation. All scientists probably agree that space research is the most exciting and challenging new area of scientific endeavor opened up to human beings. Yet many also feel that the prestige and competitive factors have forced us to move too far too fast, to spend too much effort to the 'spectacular' as contrasted to the purely scientific venture."

As expected, the engineers and technologists scorn the political and scientific critics. And they are not without substantial support from many leading scientists



President Kennedy's multi-billion-dollar Apollo man-to-moon project has become enmeshed in controversy. This is an artist's conception of a lunar landing simulator scheduled to be delivered to NASA early in 1964. (UPI)

whose pulses race pretty much like the ordinary man's in the excitement of manned space flights.

Aviation Week and Space Technology, for example, handed Eisenhower roughly for his remarks.

Among the critics, it said, are "many familiar faces ranging from ex-President Eisenhower, who still wishes the space age would dry up and blow away, to an esoteric wing of the scientific community which appears to be disturbed by the fact that non-scientist types, such as engineers and pilots, have crept into the space program and are running their portion of it with vigor and enthusiasm directed toward specific goals that some scientists regard as unseemly."

'Final Dismal Years'

"We doubt if many Americans would wish to return to those final dismal years of the Eisenhower administration when the succession of Soviet space triumphs subjected this nation to its worst international humiliation since British men-of-war stopped kidnaping American sailors on the high seas . . ."

"When the history of these times is finally written, one of the great differences between the Eisenhower and Kennedy administration will prove to be the former's inability to understand and cope with the technological tides of the era over which it presided, and the perception and vigor with which President Kennedy grasped this fact early in his regime by establishing the Apollo program as a top priority national goal and sticking with it despite the critics' chorus."

The magazine rejected attacks on the program because of its swift pace.

"A technical program that is not run at its fastest feasible pace is the most wasteful of all," it said. "Apollo is now running at very close to its optimum technical pace, perhaps a shade too slow due to fiscal limitations."

Steady Rate of Conversion

It also dismissed criticisms that the program had little or no scientific merit. It said there has been a steady rate of conversion from traditional scientific critics to supporters during the project Mercury years.

One of the most enthusiastic scientific supporters of Apollo is Britain's radio astronomer, Sir Bernard Lovell. He declared in a recent interview:

"It is tremendously important to get to the moon from the political and prestige and technological and scientific points of view."

"Scientifically, the moon is the one body in the solar system which may yield the most critical information about the formation of a planetary system and from there of life itself . . ."

"The answer must surely be to land men on the moon rather than to pursue the goal through a lengthy series of unmanned landings of instruments which will never yield the same decisive answers."

Far-Out Intellectual Endeavor

Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Glenn T. Seaborg believes the program should be carried out because "We're in the 20th century—the goal has been set. It is far-out intellectual endeavor and an exploration of nature."

President Kennedy and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson who heads the space program, agree. The President told a recent news conference, "I think time will prove, even though we can't see the answers we will find in space, that the over-all expenditures have been worthwhile. This program in many ways is going to stimulate science."

He said he did not believe that if the space budget was cut Congress would allocate the money to education or other of the avenues that critics have suggested.

Both Kennedy and Johnson have said many times that the question of going to the moon is no longer a question of being first in space, but of being first in the world.

Said Johnson: "To reach for the moon is a risk, but it is a risk we must take. Failure to go into space is even riskier."

Dispute With Buddhists Erupts Into Violence

By NEIL SHEEHAN

United Press International

Saigon, Vietnam—(UPI)—Many American officials here fear that President Ngo Dinh Diem's handling of the serious dispute with South Vietnam's Buddhist majority shows his regime may lack the political capacity to deal with its population in a guerrilla war.

The dispute, simmering for years, finally erupted into violence recently when government troops and armored cars opened fire against thousands of Buddhists demonstrating in the northern town of Hue against alleged religious discrimination. Nine persons were killed.

Buddhists accuse Diem of favoring Roman Catholics. They say his government is Catholic-dominated.

President Is Catholic

The president and all members of his family are Catholics. One of his brothers, Ngo Dinh Thuc, is archbishop of Hue.

The bloodshed led to more demonstrations and a meeting between Diem and Buddhist leaders in Saigon.

The Buddhists presented a list of demands. By making a couple of minor concessions Diem may have avoided riots and further bloodshed.

But in refusing to surrender on major issues he has put himself at loggerheads with the Buddhist leaders and done the government serious long-range political damage, many American officials indicate.

The dispute now seems

to be developing into a ranking sore which Americans fear may lead to widespread passive resistance in the countryside against government programs especially the vital strategic hamlets operation aimed at isolating the peasants from the guerrillas.

Americans here have always been disturbed by the fact that although the Buddhists in South Vietnam are in a 70 per cent majority, their relations with the government have been unfriendly for years.

Americans were incredulous at the government's handling of the demonstration in Hue to begin with and then shocked by Diem's refusal to soothe outraged feelings by publicly apologizing.

The most important of the Buddhist demands were those calling for an end to religious inequality, punishment of government officials responsible and publicly paid compensation for the families of those killed.

Demand Religious Equality Diem received them politely but told them they were "damn fools" for demanding religious equality, since the Vietnamese constitution guarantees it. He claimed Communist agents had killed the Buddhists in Hue. He praised government officials for "keeping order."

He also told the Buddhists the government would "take care of" the bereaved families. But he refused to pay public compensation, an important distinction in Vietnam.

Since the meeting with Diem thousands of yellow-

robed Buddhist priests and nuns have demonstrated again to show their dissatisfaction. The police have tolerated them, up to now.

The Buddhists plan more public memorial services, processions and hunger strikes for the Hue dead.

The government's repeated statements that Communist agents killed the Hue demonstrators, in the face of clear evidence its own troops did the shooting, also puts the regime in a damaging position of public insincerity. It hands the Communists a tailor-made propaganda issue which they are now exploiting, well-informed Americans say.

They say millions of peasants in this country look on the guerrilla war as a struggle between Diem's family and the Communists, in which they have little or nothing to gain either way.

One of the banners in a Hue demonstration said "down with the Diem regime" but the Buddhist priests, wanting to keep the demonstration along religious lines, made the demonstrators take the banner down.

Buddhist leaders, although they insist they are not out to overthrow the government, resent the fact that they have so little political power under Diem although they are the majority.

One Buddhist leader told this correspondent, "Most Buddhists want to fight Communism, because it is ruthless and materialistic, but they feel they have no stake in this government."



Buddhist priests are shown above holding a protest meeting at Main Tu Dam pagoda in Hue, Vietnam. Before microphone with hands clasped in prayer (background) is Thich Tri Quang, Buddhist high priest for central Vietnam. (UPI)