

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE COUNCIL

Meeting -- March 3, 1966

Opening Statement by the Vice President

Gentlemen --

I have asked that we get together today so that we might exchange information and opinions regarding the impact of the Fiscal 1967 budgets on our space programs, present and future. We may well soon have another session dealing with the longer run impact but it is almost impossible to assess the present without revealing some of the future effects of budget changes.

I did not ask you to come to give a detailed rundown on your Fiscal 1967 budgets. Rather, I urge you to direct your remarks to the major problem areas -- the major changes in previous plans -- the major import of

the difference between what you had originally asked for space and what the President's budget requests.

Before entering into the discussion, I would make a few brief points:

1. The overall space budget, including that of your agencies as well as of the Weather Bureau and the National Science Foundation, is down about 3.8% from what was appropriated for Fiscal 1966. In fact, it is less than for any year since Fiscal 1963. I am sure you would agree, however, that the significant thing is not so much the percentage cut but the way in which such a decrease is distributed.

2. It is my firm belief that these cuts in no sense reflect any decreased interest in or evaluation of the importance of the national space program. Rather, such cuts reflect realities -- military, political, and economic -- of the war in Vietnam.

3. This slight downward direction in funding, which I hope can be temporary, is undertaken at a time when the USSR is stepping up its space pace. I hasten to add that I do not think that their rate of activity should determine ours, but I do think that we dare not ignore for even a moment what they are doing or how fast they are doing it.

4. Also, I would like to get your views as to how your space budgets will be received by the Congress this year. The Congress is, as you know, an arena in which I have had some experience and where I might be of some help. I know they are going to look sharply at any apparent waste or duplication as well as any respects in which we may not be measuring up to our competition. I know also that for many this is an election year, and that cannot be overlooked. So, I urge you to express your views frankly in this regard.

First, I would like to call on the Department of Defense so that we might hear what the impact of the Fiscal 1967 budget is on their space activities.



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