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Directed the flight control team for the first lunar landing and Apollo 13 crew

A National Treasure

The current NASA team is a national treasure. From the early years of spaceflight, this team has been on the front lines and assured our Nation's leadership in space, science, and technology. The cancellation of the Constellation Program will result in the loss of skilled leadership and the talented NASA and contractor workforce. This action will cripple America's space efforts for many years to come.

In our early years in space, our leadership and mid-level management came from our Nation's research laboratories and from a vigorous aircraft industry. The leadership, experienced in design, development, and test, provided for a rapid maturing of the young engineers, who were inspired by President Kennedy's lunar challenge, and who joined our ranks. The Mercury and Gemini Programs provided the training ground for this young team to rapidly develop maturity and acquire the skills needed for Apollo.

If there is no continuity in the NASA and contractor leadership and an experienced workforce, any subsequent space effort will be severely challenged to develop the program management and operations skills while simultaneously establishing a highly complex program. This new team will repeat many of the same mistakes we made in the early years and will relearn the same lessons the hard way. There is no substitute for a well-experienced team to meet the challenges of a new space endeavor.

This is an unnecessary risk to be levied on the future program and its generation of leaders and must be avoided at all costs. If there is no continuity, future programs will ultimately incur more cost, development, and schedule problems.

For almost four decades, I directed the workforce that planned our space missions, developed the plans and procedures, and trained astronauts and controllers for the unforgiving and high risk aspects of spaceflight.

I am well aware of the challenges of developing leadership and building a competent and well-qualified space team. I was a member of the NASA

Space Task Group, directed the flight control team for the first lunar landing and the return of the Apollo 13 crew, and finally served as Director of NASA Mission Operations during the Shuttle era.

The current generation of NASA and contractor engineers, scientists, and technicians is incredibly talented, fully experienced, and well led. They continue the heritage of the earlier generations of space pioneers and continue the legacy we established. Today's NASA team is a national treasure, an essential element of our Nation's future in space.

Eugene F. Kranz
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