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Observance of Tenth Anniversary of the Moon Landing
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On the occasion of the observance by the Library of Congress of the landing on the Moon, I welcome the opportunity to make some recollections and observations. I regret that commitments in Maine prevent me from being present at the luncheon.

Those pivotal fourteen years I was privileged to serve on the Senate Space Committee, most of which were as the ranking minority member, were challenging, exciting and gratifying. Chairmen Lyndon B. Johnson, Robert S. Kerr and Clinton P. Anderson accorded me the role of full partner in the steering of that committee. And, in placing me on that committee, the Republican Senate dean, Styles Bridges, asked me if I was prepared to appropriate twenty billion dollars for a space program. My answer was an unhesitating and unqualified "Yes!"

For some time I have felt that there were some things badly in need of being said, however lacking in grace and however unpleasant they might be. But before saying them, I would first stress the positive and gratifying aspects of the space program supported by the Senate committee. First to come to my mind is the reassuring comeback that we made from the "second class" image created by the Soviet's successful Sputnik I and our miserable failure on the Navy "basketball" satellite. We beat the Russians to putting a man on the Moon! But that was momentary euphoria that quickly led to public apathy. It was a short term achievement in prestige and psychic income.

More gratifying from a longer point of view were the endless "spin-off" and "fall-out" gains and developments that the space program provided in the medical, scientific, technological, industrial, daily living and other fields. It is a sad commentary that the American people really have no concept of how great these gains have been and how much they profit from them every day in their daily living.

Now for the disappointments. The most dramatic, single disappointment was the Apollo fire tragedy that took the lives of three astronauts. But I am proud that we did not panic and immediately terminate the program because of that disaster, as had been demanded recently with respect to recent dear-disasters in other scientific-industrial activities.

From the long term standpoint, I am more disappointed and concerned with three matters. The first is the public apathy on the space program. Once we had a man on the Moon, the American public lost interest in the space program. The program lost public support. The public attitude was typically expressed with sayings of "So what's new?" and "We have too many problems here on Earth to be worrying about space!" Perhaps if

such attitudes had not prevailed we would have had a crash space program on developing solar energy power.

My second disappointment was the inevitable consequence of public apathy. It was merely the next step. It was the decline and fall of the Senate Space Committee. When the public lost interest, its elected representatives in Congress found the space program less productive on providing votes for reelection. There was so little interest in the Committee that in 1973 the Senate Majority had to go outside of the Committee to get someone to agree to chair the Committee as none of the sitting members would agree to becoming Chairman. And not long thereafter came the committee's demise with its carcass bequeathed as a subcommittee to another committee where it was interred.

My third disappointment has been the lack of recognition for the man who put a man on the Moon—for James E. Webb, the Space Administrator during its most crucial years. Before I elaborate on this disappointment, I wish to review the comparative recognition and gains for the glamour boys of the space program -- the Astronauts, who surely made the most of their opportunities for self-gain and got the greatest individual returns for what they invested of themselves in the program.

Those who were brought into the glamorous roles of Astronauts were basically test pilots of inspiring physical courage. But that is exactly what they were -- test pilots. They were not scientists of great skill and knowledge. They were not managerial geniuses. They were brave test pilots.

But NASA and the space program -- and Jim Webb -- moulded and developed them through rigorous mental (and physical) training into men of new and expanded skills and abilities. They grew them into men of scientific knowledge and managerial ability.

Yes, into men of business and political acumen, demonstrated by their commercial and political exploitation of the status, prestige and hero worship of their Astronaut roles, making them millionaires and propelling them into top positions in the worlds of business and government, with some even enhancing their incomes by doing television commercials, while holding top government and corporate positions. Yes, although not too active in the military Reserve, after resigning from their Regular status, some were promoted to top Reserve rank merely because of their Astronaut roles.

Yes, they had the best of all worlds. They had the maximum of psychic income in the hero worship and recognition they received. They had the maximum of economic income in their aggressive commercial exploitation of being Astronauts.

What a contrast to the thousands of faceless heroes and heroines of the team putting the astronauts on the Moon -- the scientists, the technicians, and the managers, who put everything together to put the hero Astronauts on the Moon! Their Captain and the Manager, James E. Webb, typifies these behind-the-scenes workers and their self-effacing character. For James E. Webb not only put the Space Team of thousands together

-- he made them a working team, asking and getting from them their very best, very much in the style of the legendary football coach, Vince Lombardi.

Jim Webb not only built the team and put it together and managed it brilliantly, he pushed for the program with the Executive branch to get support from the Presidents and with the Congress. He had to take the heat and fire of partisan political attacks from headline-hungry politicians courting investigative reporters and from those clamoring to divert funds from the space program to the welfare program.

I know. I saw this first hand in my work on the Senate Space Committee! But as compared to the hero Astronauts, what recognition or materialistic gains did Jim Webb, and the thousands behind the scenes he typified, receive? Minimal, if any. They declined to commercially exploit their official positions. And today, they are forgotten men and women of a practically forgotten program deserted by so many of the self-gaining Astronauts.

What we need today on the energy crisis is another Jim Webb, who not only could build and inspire a crash program team, especially on solar energy, but who would have the credibility and rapport with the Congress on getting cooperation on necessary legislation and getting on with the crucial job needed to be done.