

Laboratory in Pasadena, California. Under the leadership of Dr. Charles Elachi, the men and women of JPL work tirelessly to develop and manage America's robotic exploration of space.

Last January, even as we still mourned the loss of the crew of *Columbia* and the consequential interruption of the Shuttle program, JPL brought America back to Mars. The Spirit rover and its twin, Opportunity, landed on Mars to begin what was planned as a 3-month mission to evaluate whether conditions would at one time have been suitable for life on that planet.

Equipped with cameras, spectrometers and a grinder, America's robotic explorers have been hard at work for more than 16 months and are still going strong. Their discovery of evidence of past water on Mars last year was the top scientific "Breakthrough of the Year," according to the journal "Science." People around the world have been captivated by the stunning photographs of the Martian surface and the planet's ruddy sky. JPL's website is been visited more than 16 billion times; and, that is right, billion.

Last July, Cassini arrived at Saturn to begin a multiyear exploration of the planet and its myriad moons. Cassini carried with it a small European-built probe that landed on Saturn's largest moon, Titan, earlier this year.

JPL's spectacular missions have not only brought us incalculable scientific data, they have also sustained America's interest in space flight, especially the Mars missions. Now, as NASA prepares to accelerate the development of the Crew Exploration Vehicle and move forward with the return of humans to the moon, the space agency and Congress must take care to continue to provide adequate resources to support the robotic exploration of space that is JPL's specialty. In the short term, JPL is in danger of being a victim of its own success as the continued operation of Spirit and Opportunity have put pressure on the budget for the overall exploration of Mars.

Last year, the President announced a long-term goal of landing on Mars. This is an ambitious and worthy goal, but the technological and physiological challenges, not to mention the cost, means that it will be decades before an American walks on the Martian surface. In the interim, we have to keep interest in space high as we continue to explore the red planet and our other neighbors with relatively inexpensive probes that are better equipped than humans to survive the extreme hardship of long-duration space travel.

Mr. Speaker, as we continue to contemplate the future of our space program, I urge NASA and my colleagues not to deprive JPL one of the crown jewels of the American science and technology program of adequate resources. For thousands of years, people have gazed into the heaven and wondered what was up there. Thanks to NASA and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, we are beginning to learn the answers to that age-old question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BILIRAKIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

NATIONAL SECURITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss national security and public safety for our country and who is responsible for that duty.

Public safety, that is the first duty of government. Local security, local public safety goes to local cities and local law enforcement. National security, national public safety is the responsibility of the Federal Government.

But there is an unfunded public safety mandate that is affixating an already struggling industry: our airline industry. The airline industry is an important sector of the American economy. With increasing fuel costs and taxes, the industry lost \$9 billion last year alone and has lost \$32 billion since September 11, 2001. Presently, taxes and fees comprise 26 percent of a \$200 airline ticket. The flights seem to be at near capacity, yet some airlines are losing money, and I want to mention just one reason why.

Although the Federal Government has taken over much of the security for air travel after the terrorist attacks of September 11, airlines are still paying for national security and public safety. The airline industry forks over \$777 million a year out of their own pockets for an unfunded Federal security mandate such as catering, security, security for checkpoints and exit lanes, and first class, or first flight cabin sweeps.

Specifically, the people who load the peanuts on the airplanes, for example, the airlines are forced to expend \$81 million, not only on their salaries, but the security checks on these caterers.

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The people who match your ticket with your driver's license, and then mark it up with a red Crayola at checkpoints and exit lanes, airlines, not the government, dispense roughly \$80 million on these people.

And the first flight cabin sweep crew that inspects the plane prior to boarding, the people who check for bombs in the bathrooms, airlines pick up a \$26 million tab for them.

But perhaps the largest unfunded security mandate is the Federal Air Marshal Service, the one which costs the airlines \$195 million every year. Under current law Federal air marshals are permitted to fly without a cost to the Federal Government or the air marshals.

They sometime fly in pairs, and sometime sit in first class seats to allow them to better protect the cockpit. But they can bump off the plane a paying passenger as well. The Air Transportation Association estimates that airlines are losing \$195 million a year in opportunity costs by losing these seats.

Continental Airlines, a carrier based out of Houston, Texas, part of my Congressional district, loses \$7 to \$9 million a year because they cannot sell the seats used by Federal marshals to the public.

I say again, national security and public safety are the responsibilities of the Federal Government. If the Federal Government wants air marshals on our airplanes, the Federal Government should pay for this service.

The Federal Government should shell out the money to pay for the travel of Federal air marshals, because this is a law enforcement expense, instead of saddling the expenditure on the airplanes.

Mr. Speaker, we want the Federal air marshals on our planes, and while many of their accomplishments remain below the radar, their presence on thousands of domestic flights since 9/11 have helped to maintain the safety of our skies, but the Government should pay their way.

Mr. Speaker, some may argue that it is the airline's responsibility to provide for some reasonable security. Well, the airplanes already cough up scores of dollars to comply with Federal regulations. For example, the Federal Airline Administration reports that full deployment of hardened cockpit doors meeting outlined specifications have been implemented on about 10,000 airliners and foreign aircraft flying to and from the United States.

Who paid for most of this, Mr. Speaker? The airlines, because the Government, our Government told them to.

Still, airlines face additional expenditures in the name of safety. Video monitors and other devices to alert pilots of cabin activity as well as guns in the cockpit are just a few of the other efforts being undertaken by the industry, all of which, Mr. Speaker, cost money.

If the Government does not offer financial assistance to implement these technologies, who will? Once again, it is the airlines. When will we be substantially decreasing the hundreds of millions of dollars they incur in unfunded Federal security mandates?

Mr. Speaker, we must bring some relief to these carriers by reducing these unfunded mandates that they are expected to pay.

I urge my colleagues to help preserve this vital industry and start imploring