

June 17 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1993

Statement on the Space Station Program June 17, 1993

At a time when our long-term economic strength depends on our technological leadership and our ability to reduce the deficit, we must invest in technology but invest wisely, making the best possible use of every dollar. That's why I asked for a review of NASA's space station program. Concerns over rising costs and mismanagement raised serious questions about a program vital to our technological leadership. I instructed NASA to redesign the space station program in a way that would preserve its critical science and space research and ensure international cooperation, but significantly reduce costs and improve management.

NASA has met that challenge, offering a plan that will substantially reduce costs to taxpayers, improve management, preserve research, and allow the United States to continue to work with its international partners and keep its international commitments. That was the conclusion of an outstanding panel of independent experts who carefully reviewed NASA's proposals. And that is my conclusion as well, after thoroughly considering their report and recommendations. It will take not just a redesign of the space station but a redesign of NASA itself.

I am calling for the U.S. to work with our international partners to develop a reduced-cost, scaled-down version of the original Space Station *Freedom*. At the same time, I will also seek to enhance and expand the opportunities for international participation in the space station project so that the space station can serve as a model of nations coming together in peaceful cooperation. Finally, I will be directing NASA to implement personnel reductions and major management changes to cut costs, reduce bureaucracy, and improve efficiency. The national performance review team, led by Vice President Gore, has been essential in working with NASA to develop these management proposals. We are going to redesign NASA at the same time that we redesign the space station.

To make maximum use of our investments and meet the scientific goals we have set, the

specific design we will pursue will be a simplified version of Space Station *Freedom* recommended by the review panel. We will work with Congress, NASA, and our international partners during the next 90 days to make the very best use of this design. The details of this proposal will be delivered to Congress within the next few days. I have asked Dr. John Gibbons, my Science and Technology Adviser, to transmit a letter to NASA with more detailed instructions for implementing this decision.

The redesigned program will capitalize on the investments we have already made. However, with its deep cuts in future development and operations costs, this redesigned program will save more than \$4 billion over the next 5 years, compared with our assessments of what the real costs of funding the planned Space Station *Freedom* would have been. Over the 2-decade life of the program, these savings will grow to more than \$18 billion.

There is no doubt that we are facing difficult budget decisions. However, we cannot retreat from our obligation to invest in our future. Budget cuts alone will not restore our vitality. I believe strongly that NASA and the space station program represent important investments in that future and that these investments will yield benefits in medical research, aerospace, and other critical technology areas. As well, the space station is a model of peaceful international cooperation, offering a vision of the new world in which confrontation has been replaced with cooperation.

In making this announcement today, I want to recognize the extraordinary efforts of all those involved. Vice President Gore and Dr. Gibbons assembled an outstanding team of experts, led by Dr. Charles Vest, president of MIT, who assessed several cost-saving options prepared by NASA. This review included not only the design of the space station but also the structure and management of NASA itself. Their work and the work of all those at NASA involved in this project has been invaluable.