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Moon missions: Deep budgetary freeze

Posted January 29, 2010 11:45 AM



by Mark Silva

With the return of the full moon comes budgetary talk that the U.S. may not be returning to the moon anytime soon.



Our colleagues at the Orlando Sentinel -- Robert Block and Mark K. Matthews -- offered a jump this week on the orbital aspects of the 2011 federal budget that the White House will propose on Monday: No moon money.

"NASA's plans to return astronauts to the moon are dead," the Sentinel crew reported. "So are the rockets being designed to take them there -- that is, if President Barack Obama gets his way.

"When the White House releases his budget proposal Monday, there will be no money for the Constellation program that was supposed to return humans to the moon by 2020. The troubled and expensive Ares I rocket that was to replace the space shuttle to ferry humans to space will be gone, along with money for its bigger brother, the Ares V cargo rocket that was to launch the fuel and supplies needed to take humans back to the moon.

"There will be no lunar landers, no moon bases, no Constellation program at all. In their place, according to White House insiders, agency officials, industry executives and congressional sources familiar with Obama's long-awaited plans for the space agency, NASA will look at developing a new "heavy-lift" rocket that one day will take humans and robots to explore beyond low Earth orbit. But that day will be years -- possibly even a decade or more -- away.

"In the meantime, the White House will direct NASA to concentrate on Earth-science projects -- principally, researching and monitoring climate change -- and on a new technology research and development program that will one day make human exploration of asteroids and the inner solar system possible."

"We certainly don't need to go back to the moon," said one administration official quoted in the report.

The unveiling of the president's budget is only the opening volley of the year's budgetary battles. And our colleagues note that this aspect of the budget is likely to encounter some resistance in Congress.

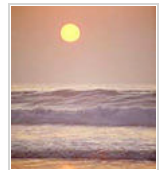
Energy Crisis? Or Opportunity?



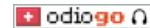
Energy efficiency could save U.S. \$600 billion

(Reuters Environmental Online Report)

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Like the freeze on discretionary spending that President Barack Obama will propose Monday, the deep-chill for moon exploration ought to make for hot times on the Hill.

(The graphic illustration above comes from FOX News.)



Comments

With sky-high budget deficits, there needs to be some sacrifice and rationality. Space is not a necessity, but it also shouldn't be killed. Jobs, technology, growth has come from the space program. Scale things back, but don't end them.

Posted by: John D | January 29, 2010 2:03 PM

John D,
For once you have a post that is reasoned and doesn't read like the deranged ramblings of a petulant child. But if you read the entire article, NASA will now be focusing on earth-science projects like researching and monitoring climate change. Unfortunately, you and the rest of the insignificant 1% fringe that refuses to understand or accept climate change don't see the value in this.

Cheers to President Obama for his foresight and leadership.

Posted by: Blood Simple | January 29, 2010 2:52 PM

Read the SOTU and what Obama actually does, not his phony "freeze" rhetoric. Reality: Obama is calling for INCREASED federal spending. Some \$40-70 billion worth.

Posted by: Equal time | January 29, 2010 2:57 PM

John D,
We may be able to take up a collection (private monies) on the Swamp to send you on your way.

Posted by: Kenny Bunkport | January 29, 2010 5:31 PM

Blood simple, NASA should not be wasting its time on phony climate change. Climate change has been taking place since this planet began. It is interesting to note all the stuff coming out about the climate change scientists playing fast and loose with the the numbers, hiding numbers that disprove the global warming theory, etc. But, no, NASA putting its time and energy into climate change will not provide jobs, technology or growth for the agency or for mankind.

Posted by: John D | January 29, 2010 5:53 PM

No Blood to the Brain points out where the NASA budget is going - to cook the books more on Global Warming.

Simple math - 30 years fo global warming on a planet that is at least 300,000,000 years old. In statistics - that is called insignificant.

Posted by: Terry | January 29, 2010 6:04 PM

Come-on folks, you're getting side tracked again by bashing or defending climate change and you're missing the whole issue. We have been wasting money for years with a space program that has been funding nothing but a bunch of scientists that want to play in moon sand. Not even our great-great-great-great-great grandchildren will ever live there. It's a bottomless pit for our tax dollars. So. Call your representatives and let them know you'd rather buy climate research than moon sand and maybe one day you'll have enough warning about a Rita coming your way as a sideline result from studying climate change. You try a Rita. You won't like it one bit. Quit your whining and act like you can think. Geez.

Posted by: irene | January 29, 2010 6:44 PM

And like a moth to a flame, Trickle Terry adds his 1%er 2 cents. Insignificant fringe, enjoy your status.

Posted by: Blood Simple | January 29, 2010 6:51 PM

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Good news Johnny D,
Our R&D team is reporting significant progress, using only private funding. They project a launch in the near future and you will be able to bring Terry along as well (Bruce and Paulo failed the physical).
Happy trails...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKoB0MHVBvM>

Posted by: Kenny Bunkport | January 29, 2010 8:02 PM

Global Warming believers are the flat earthers. There is no science behind it. Just made up numbers.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEiLgbBGKvk>

Ask this guy?

Someone who believes in global warming and a weakened dollar - he could be in the Obama administration

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/30/world/middleeast/30binladen.html>

Posted by: Terry | January 29, 2010 8:56 PM

Good move. We went to the Moon, got tired of it and killed it in the 70's after spending billions of those 70's \$\$\$\$. Same thing would happen again. Why throw good money after bad.

Keep the unmanned probes funded and the Hubble, and space station. Also, there is no reason to go to Mars, unless a probe digs up an artifact, or sees a ruin or fossil.

Not likely.

Posted by: C.Morris | January 29, 2010 9:01 PM

Schadenfreude Southern Style:

Texas has been getting pounded by weird climatic events....

All that rain before the election....

Drought....

Snow...

Just keep tellin' yerself all this is "normal"

Chicago is one of those rare locations that seems to have benefited from climate change:

Our winters have actually gotten milder.

So: a double shot of schadenfreude to all Bushites in Tx.

O, and Ike was right.

Too bad Houston is so much into space pork.....

Posted by: ornery | January 30, 2010 9:51 AM

The National Space Program requires a practical application of technology. First, the development of a heavy lift, reusable in part or whole, launch vehicle, achievable objectives, such as a mission to Phobos, as cited by former astronaut Edwin Aldrin. The emplacement of solar power satellites for power generation modelled after Astrium's infrared transmission system.

Our European and Japanese allies should help contribute in this new energy initiative. China and India would become appropriate energy recipients.

Posted by: Christopher Scarzo | January 30, 2010 1:23 PM

This is very sad for me. I'd always felt NASA's program was misguided, but mainly for its timidity.

However, if we're bankrupt and must drop real space exploration, at least we can benefit from one innovative aspect of the new approach. If astronauts are to fly coach to the space station, certainly we can also get rid of Air Force One and all the government's other passenger planes. It'd be a bit irritating for me, sitting in coach, to watch my congressmen and their flunkies filling the business class seats, but it'd be good for Delta and, perhaps, we'd finally see some improvement in the TSA.

Posted by: HeWhoWalksByNight | January 31, 2010 3:43 PM

-
hey, politics, engineers, scientists, why are you lose your time?
-
you already have the solution to your problems!
-
just look towards this side!
-
there is only ONE person in the world that has...
-
said that the Ares-1 was "too expensive"... in 2005...
-
proposed the RIGHT shuttle-derived rocket (the FAST-SLV aka Ares-5-
lite) in 2006...
-
said that the 5-segments SRB can't work... in 2006...
-
said that the Ares-1 can't fly... in 2007...
-
etc. etc. etc.
-
yes, he isn't american... but, who cares?
-
you just need to give away a retired Shuttle to have the solutions to
your problems...
-
too much?
-
no, it's less than 1% of the money burned by NASA to (only) add a 5th
segment to the SRB...
-
do you REALLY want to SAVE the Constellation and Moon program?
-
do you REALLY want to CUT the US spaceflight GAP?
-
do you REALLY want to save thousands space-related jobs?
-
if the answer is YES then read this article: <http://ow.ly/10hxl>
-

Posted by: [gaetano marano](#) | January 31, 2010 5:07 PM

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(Anonymous comments will not be posted. Comments aren't posted immediately. They're screened for relevance to the topic, obscenity, spam and over-the-top personal attacks. We can't always get them up as soon as we'd like so please be patient. Thanks for visiting The Swamp.)

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