

National Space Society
Press Release
NASA's MARS Exploration Plan

(20 November 2000)

NSS expresses disappointment in NASA Mars exploration plan

WASHINGTON, Nov. 20 - The senior leadership of the National Space Society, following a detailed review of the NASA Mars Exploration Plan released last month, has released the following statement:

"The National Space Society, which advocates space development for creation of a spacefaring civilization with people living and working beyond the Earth, has reviewed the recent Mars exploration plan released by NASA. While we understand that this is a plan for the robotic scientific exploration of Mars, the Society is disappointed that the long-range needs for human missions to Mars do not play a major role in the planning of these robotic missions. While the space agency has expressed the intent that these exploratory missions will be needed should the nation choose to send humans beyond Earth orbit in the next decades, specific technologies that will be needed to support human exploration do not seem to be a priority in NASA budget planning.

We believe this process is shortsighted. U.S. space policy should not preclude NASA from consideration of future, currently unapproved missions in the formulation of their long-range plans. The technology that will be needed to support human expeditions should not be overlooked, and a detailed, long-range development plan for blending robotic and human Mars exploration should be a priority with the next administration and NASA administrator. The National Space Society urges those who will be chosen to lead NASA in the next administration not to overlook these long range needs for future human spaceflight goals."

The National Space Society is a pro-space advocacy organization whose 23,000 members worldwide are working to create a spacefaring civilization. To learn more about NSS and its programs, call 202-543-1900 or go to <http://www.nss.org>"