

**Remarks on 35th Anniversary of Apollo 11
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It is a great privilege for me to participate in this important commemoration. I am going to provide a very long view of the significance of Apollo 11.

More than fifteen thousand years ago, as the glaciers of the last ice age receded, our ancestors moved quickly to reclaim the newly unfrozen territory. What motivated them to probe the limits of their livable space? What attracted them to the margins of the icy wasteland? This was well before any dream of agriculture, of city-states, or of forms of government that would unleash the power of unified action by a people. But there must have been men and women whose inner vision pressed them forward. And among them there must have been a few who studied the risks, and prepared themselves for adventure, and returned with a message of hope. It would have been their example, the obvious fact of their survival and the precautions that made it possible, that encouraged their clans to follow after them and create a new way of life in a new land.

We have only our imagination to reconstruct the distant past. That and our experience with the present. The widely known history of the Apollo program has become a paradigm of human will in the age of technology. The Apollo 11 mission is evidence of the power of an idea coupled with technical know-how, supported by a resourceful people. The dramatic culmination of the Apollo program in the unique event we are celebrating tonight, the first footsteps on the moon by Armstrong and Aldrin (with Collins floating above), is a symbol of the capacity of the human race to move beyond its apparent limits and break new ground. Everyone who helped to make this happen – the people at NASA, the teams and crews of astronauts, their families, legislators, even auditors and budget officials – deserve our praise and our thanks for showing us what we can do as a people if we put our minds to it.

Singular events are like opening nights – they attract plenty of attention in their own time, but their significance can only be judged by what comes afterward. Neil Armstrong's words "*... one giant leap for mankind*" suggest something more than the culmination of a tremendous effort. They evoke the metaphor of a journey, where great things are accomplished by individual human beings, one small step at a time. Immediately after Apollo 11 came six more lunar missions, five of them reaching the surface, the final one in December 1972 carrying geologist Harrison Schmitt, the first scientist-astronaut and the last – I should say the most recent – of the 12 men who have left their footprints in the lunar dust. But these were all part of the beginning phase of exploration and discovery and demonstration of what humans could do beyond the surface of the Earth. The true significance of the Apollo program still lies ahead.

Now that the beginnings are behind us, we are accumulating experience in space-based operations, both human and robotic. We are learning difficult lessons about managing complex space programs in a sustained mode over many years and across different Administrations. We

are facing up to the realities of cost and risk, and to the challenge of responding to our society's remarkable desire to lead in space. Our next efforts will be judged by their impact on the future – and this is an important thing to keep in mind. Will future generations thank us for breaking down the barriers to space, or will they regret that our actions were too short-sighted to be of much help in the long run? We are the inheritors of Apollo, and our actions are part of a long chain of events that lead into a future in which the region of space accessible to us will be included in humanity's sphere of activity.

This is what the vision means that is crystallized in President Bush's January address. We have embarked on a long journey. We have an obligation to the future to invest our resources wisely to reduce the cost and risk of operations in space, step by step. We are not racing for transient glory, or even to stake a claim to territory, but to enable the use of space for all future generations. Thirty five years ago our nation broke the ground for the way to space, and now we will broaden that way, one step, one mission, at a time, and render it accessible to human use.

We only have our imagination to foresee the distant future, but we can picture others looking back and guessing at the logic of these first ventures into space. Our wish today is that our followers would say about us, a thousand years from now, "They opened space for us, and then won it, step by step over many years, to make it productive for the future." Our successors may not remember all the steps along the way, but they will certainly remember that first small step of Apollo 11 that showed it could be done. The Apollo program is a legacy, not to us, but to the future, and it is up to us to increase its value and pass it on.