

The future scope of the space program beyond Apollo is an important issue facing the Nation. Fiscal year 1969 continues the decline that has led us to such drastic measures as stopping Saturn IB production, discontinuing Saturn V production, and delaying NERVA engine development. The fiscal year 1969 program for NERVA permits some work to proceed and retains the option to resume our past momentum in this program. I am confident that the country will adopt a vigorous space program leading in the next decade to more advanced exploration and exploitation of this new medium. This kind of program will require new propulsion capabilities that are exemplified in the nuclear rocket. We intend, therefore, to urge that the Nation proceed with nuclear rocket flight development if the national goals and corresponding budget levels permit. If conditions are such that we cannot proceed, we will have lost a large national investment and an opportunity for the exploitation of a significant advancement in technology.

Space Technology.—At a time when we are reducing our planned space missions and deferring development of operational space hardware, it is important that, to the extent we can, we continue our efforts in developing and advancing the technology which will be necessary when work toward specific future missions can be resumed.

Of the \$180.5 million total authorized for Basic Research, Space Vehicles Systems, Electronics System, Human Factor Systems, Space Power and Electric Propulsion Systems and Chemical Propulsion, we are providing a total of \$178.4 million in the operating plan. This is a reduction of \$21.5 million from the budget request.

Work in the important technologies of long endurance life support equipment and man and man-machine relationships will proceed as planned. In many other areas, however, the pace of research and technical development will be reduced, especially in efforts that support advanced space missions. Investigations of high energy space propulsion systems will be limited in scope, as well as the effort devoted to magneto-hydrodynamic power generation and electric propulsion system investigations. Although research on the critical technical problems of new launch vehicles will continue, the \$3.1 million included in the budget request for large solid rockets is not included in the operating plan. Flight experiments on optical telescope technology, on laser communications, and on a meteoroid probe to the asteroid belt is deferred, and SNAP-8 system testing, while continued, is reduced.

TRACKING AND DATA ACQUISITION

The budget request for tracking and data acquisition of \$304.8 million was reduced to \$289.8 million in the Authorization Act. The reduction in total available resources has required a further reduction of \$9.8 million to a new total of \$280 million in the operating plan.

These reductions will limit the amount of tracking and data acquisition support which can be provided for spacecraft now aloft and for future missions; however, the plan provides full support for the Apollo schedule I outlined previously.

CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES

The budget request for Construction of Facilities totaled \$45 million. \$39.6 million was authorized and \$21.8 million was appropriated. The amount included in the operating plan is \$35.7 million, the