# News and Comment

## Space: Formidable Political Base Overshadows Attempts to Revise Administration's Lunar Program

As Project Apollo, the manned lunar landing program, moves into its 4th year, the political alignments that affect this vast technological enterprise are becoming solidified and reasonably predictable.

Space, like civil rights, veterans' benefits, or urban renewal, has now become a well-rooted part of the American landscape—far more so than is generally realized by many persons who, for one reason or another, feel an aversion to spending $20 billion for landing a man on the moon. It has its own politics, its own economics, and its own congressional champions. And, while opponents of the manned lunar landing continue to assail the venture for what they consider to be an erroneous allocation of national resources, the basic political reality in space is that Apollo has passed beyond the question of whether it is right or wrong. As in the case of the child who is told that he is going to bed and can have a choice of red or blue pajamas, the basic issue of Apollo has been decided and politically sustained: there will be a rapidly paced, costly attempt to carry out a manned lunar landing, and about the only thing left open by the politics and economics of the situation is whether the attempt will be within this decade or in the very first few years of the 1970's. So far, and with little difficulty, the proponents of a landing in this decade have had their way, and though the opposition is becoming broader and louder, the fact is that not even the outer political perimeter of the space program has yet been seriously challenged.

It is clear, however, that the assaults will increase in volume, for as space has developed a political constituency, it has also inevitably developed a political opposition—though this is only now beginning to show signs of a potential for effective activity.

The development of this opposition is a relatively recent occurrence, and it comes long after the space program has deeply implanted itself on the national scene. When President Kennedy, 3 weeks after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, suddenly asked Congress to add $549 million to the space budget (raising it to $1.8 billion) as a down payment on a moon launching in this decade, he was operating in a period of public excitement that virtually canceled out the traditional processes of public policy making. Many members of Congress were privately uncertain, doubtful, or opposed, but voted for the increase without a public quibble, quite probably because they felt that the young President had already suffered such great humiliation at the hands of Castro that they weren't going to turn him down on something that he deemed highly important. Various groups in American public life that regularly tell the world what they think about major governmental undertakings were similarly silent, with the result that when the space program—with Apollo as its principal part—was a vulnerable fledgling, a sort of tacit conspiracy to withhold dissent assured it a period of unopposed growth. It thereupon grew, as no peacetime program has ever grown: from $1.8 billion in fiscal 1962 to $3.7 billion the following year, and to $5.1 billion in the fiscal year that has just ended.

And, as this money went out into the American economy, space developed a constituency that, in terms of economic and political self-interest, dwarfs the lately arrived opposition—an opposition, significantly, whose only common meeting ground is a feeling that Apollo's money could be better spent on earth.

The breadth and depth of this constituency are illustrated by a few statistics, which, though open to question in some cases, leave no doubt that the plan to land a man on the moon has become a critical economic factor in the lives of an extremely large number of people. According to NASA testimony before Congress, 300,000 persons will be employed on Apollo by next year; 31 states received NASA prime contract awards in excess of $1 million last year; of these states, eight received awards of over $50 million each. In fiscal 1963, NASA provided $73 million in grants and contracts to 139 universities, including many institutions which were largely ignored by other federal granting agencies, and which therefore have sound reasons for gratitude to NASA.

The development of NASA's constituency is further illuminated by other figures. The population of Brevard County, Florida, site of Cape Kennedy, rose from 23,000 in 1950 to 111,000 in 1960; the population of Huntsville, Alabama, site of the Marshall Space Flight Center, rose from 16,000 in 1950 to 72,000 in 1960. In Hancock County, Mississippi, where NASA has acquired 140,000 acres for a static rocket test installation, 3000 construction workers, in the employ of 75 contractors, are building some $500 million worth of facilities. It is expected that, by next summer, the new installation will directly employ 1700 persons. Local businessmen happily prophesy that the newly arrived employees and their families will help increase the population by 9630, creating business for 51 new retail stores, a need for schools for 2425 additional children, and an increase in local bank deposits of $8.8 million.

In Michoud, near New Orleans, Louisiana, where NASA is building a vast facility for the fabrication of space vehicles, the local chamber of commerce is anticipating a population increase of 35,900, a $33.1 million a year increase in retail sales, $22.9 million more in bank deposits, 9700 more passenger cars, and 6500 more workers in non-space businesses.

The figures and expectations in other parts of the country provide a similar story of people with a strong economic interest in space, and, as might be expected, the most determined congressional supporters of space expenditures —by coincidence or not—are from space states. With rare exceptions they hew to the cause of space with the same diligence that farm-state legislators show in maintaining their constituents' access to the U.S. Treasury. California,

which receives some 50 percent of NASA's outlays, is not likely to breed legislators opposed to space, especially at a time when California's defense-related industries are suffering from budgetary cutbacks. Nor is opposition, or even neutrality, likely to prosper among the other principal beneficiaries of the space establishment—Texas, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, most of which, because of their one-party status, have acquired congressional seniority which gives them power disproportionate to their numbers.

To a great extent, then, it is the development of this political-economic foundation that explains the moon program's ability to thrive long past its emergence from the political incubator in which it spent its first few years. The existence of this base, and the complementary existence of a nascent political-economic opposition, was perhaps most clearly spelled out 2 weeks ago, when Senator Fulbright, from space-less Arkansas, sought to cut the Apollo program's budget by 10 percent. The Senator, who argued that terrestrial welfare needs should be given priority over landing on the moon in this decade, was challenged by Senator Holland of Florida, who pointed out, quite correctly, that the space budget has become a vehicle for putting a great deal of money into the nation's universities. To which Fulbright replied:

> The State of Florida is a principal beneficiary of this bill. I appreciate the Senator's [Holland's] interest in it. I would be interested in it too, if that kind of money were being spent in Arkansas. . . . If it were being spent there it would be extremely difficult for me to oppose it. Not having any strong state interest involved, I can be objective about it.

However, when it came to a vote, "strong state interest" appears to have prevailed, for, by 43 to 38, the Senate rejected the 10-percent cut. An analysis of the vote shows that, with one or two exceptions, space-state Senators were against the 10-percent cut, while those whose states are on the low end of NASA's expenditure list were for cutting back the funds.

### No Real Challenge

Since a five-vote loss in a 100-member body is by no means a drubbing, opponents of Apollo are currently deriving a good deal of encouragement from Fulbright's effort. But the political strength of the space program is vastly greater than the vote suggests. (After the Fulbright cut was voted down, the Senate swiftly voted 78 to 3 to give NASA $5.246 billion, just $57 million below the administration request.) The strength, which in fact has not yet even been subjected to a serious challenge, derives from a fairly complex series of factors.

First of all, it is as inevitable as such things can be inevitable that, even without a manned lunar landing program, there would be a rather large program of space exploration. Such a program was under way through the Eisenhower administration, and, in harmony with the growing federal role in research and development, it was regularly increasing right up to the time Kennedy proposed the lunar landing. Secondly, the national trauma produced by Sputnik resulted in space becoming closely associated with the most untouchable of legislative issues—national security—a term which assures easy passage for virtually anything to which it can reasonably be applied. (The National Defense Education Act would probably still be languishing in the Capitol if it had simply been titled the National Education Act.)

### Cold War Motivation

The Soviets' space effort provided an impetus which Eisenhower exploited only moderately, but which Kennedy exploited vigorously. Finally, the Kennedy administration demonstrated a good deal of political shrewdness in distributing space largesse to assure maximum political return. Geographical characteristics and existing capabilities limited the opportunities for site selection (Chicago, for example, couldn't compete for Cape Kennedy's role as a launching site). But where possible, the plums went to the suitable sites that would bring the best congressional dividends. If any one member of Congress could have caused fiscal misery for NASA, it was Representative Albert Thomas, from near Houston, who heads the appropriations subcommittee which passes on NASA funds. NASA, after careful study of various site possibilities, concluded that Houston was the best choice for its $350-million manned spacecraft center. Thomas has since snipped the space budget here and there, but considering that he virtually demolished the administration's civil defense program and gutted the NSF budget last year (on the grounds that NSF was growing too rapidly!) his gentleness to NASA is grounds for wonder.

Thus, Congress initially acquiesced in the space program and then, as various regions of the country developed an economic interest in space, it became an ally of the program. But the impetus for the present scale of effort came from Kennedy, whose motivations, although dovetailing with those of the Congress, were considerably different.

Conceivably, even without the Bay of Pigs disaster, Kennedy would have set forth the moon landing as a national goal. (The fact is, however, that when he inherited Eisenhower's space budget, he asked Congress to add only $126 million to it, and it was only after the Cuban episode that he proposed the moon program and sought money for it. NASA now argues that the moon program had its origins in the Eisenhower administration, which may be the case, but it is difficult to reconcile this assertion with Eisenhower's description of Apollo as "nuts.") For Kennedy, however, technical supremacy was a mandatory goal for this nation in its international relations as well as in its domestic life. Counting heavily in administration thinking were USIA opinion polls which showed that, in many nations around the world, space achievements are equated with scientific and technical strength. The influence of these polls, which are not released to the public, appears to have carried a great deal of weight in administration councils, for, when privately defending the space program, many government officials frankly assert that the program cannot reasonably be assessed simply in terms of its scientific and technical value. The image of this nation as the leading power of the world, they contend, could not be maintained if the Russians were running away with space technology.

### Technical Supremacy

In addition, Kennedy, though not well versed in the substance of science and technology, was keenly attuned to the power of science and technology to affect the world and, justifiably or not, alighted upon the manned lunar landing as a focal point for effort that would bring forth the Nation's maximum capabilities in the acquisition and application of knowledge. Thus, with the White House pushing and Congress responsive to being pushed, the space program, in a relatively short period, achieved a political and economic maturity that makes it quite capable of

withstanding the attacks that are now increasing in volume.

These attacks, it should be noted, suffer from lack of any common interest outside of preferences for spending Apollo's money on other enterprises. For a time the Air Force was doing its best to undermine NASA so that it could inherit a larger role in space. But since the Air Force has been unable to convince the civilian managers of the Defense Department that there is a military job, except for reconnaissance, that can be done better from space than from the air, it has, for the present at least, lost out in the battle over space jurisdiction. Accordingly, it has now ceased sniping at NASA and, presumably, is reconciled to NASA's developing the technology that it might ultimately take over.

Thus, what is happening in the politics of space is that space is now blending into the general national political scene. It has its friends and foes, its economic interests and a growing number of economic opponents, in space-poor states and, increasingly, among successful non-space industries that don't like to see their taxes going to a fully government-supported industrial effort. But the space establishment is now well founded, and those who would like to alter it in any substantial way have a formidable task ahead of them. The task is made all the more formidable by the fact that President Johnson has conspicuously and, probably, irretrievably lashed his prestige to the present program. And, though criticism of the moon program is increasing, in books, in newspaper editorials, and on the Senate floor, it would be well to remember that in American politics there is often a great disparity between the ability to make noise and the ability to control events. So far, despite the rising volume of anti-space sentiments, the forces behind the administration program remain so potent that the administration hasn't had to resort to even a bit of arm twisting to get its way. For window dressing purposes it is now often said that Congress is taking "hard looks" at NASA and trimming its budget, but when all is said and done, NASA will receive some $5.2 billion this year, which is quite close to what it sought. Doubts may exist about the wisdom of a manned lunar landing in this decade, but the doubts have not been reflected in money, which is the true measure of political power.

—D. S. GREENBERG

## Drug Politics: Industry Seeks "Court of Appeals" To Challenge FDA Rulings on Drug Safety

The relationship between the federal government and the pharmaceutical industry is something like the relationship of a father and child on a seesaw: the child may have the illusion that they are perfectly balanced, or even, on occasion, that his weight has thrust his father in the air—but all along his father's feet are on the ground. The industry's periodic cries of pain suggest that it is being buffeted about by superior governmental forces, but the balance between industry and government is at best a tottering one, and for the most part the industry stays sturdily rooted to the ground.

For this reason it is hard to take too seriously proposals of the drug industry which would have the effect of insulating it still more against what it regards as the ravages of federal regulation. Nonetheless such a proposal is now afoot, and it appears to have the unanimous support of the industry as well as considerable backing from the medical profession and academic circles. Essentially the proposal calls for a scientific advisory board to which manufacturers could appeal unfavorable decisions of the Food and Drug Administration.

The proposal is in its early stages, and full details have not yet been considered by any of its proponents. Testifying before a House Government Operations subcommittee headed by Representative L. H. Fountain (D–N.C.) during an investigation of the safety of new drugs, Austin Smith, president of the drug industry trade group, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PMA) said: "It is also our belief that a Council for Scientific Review should be established to provide an appeal mechanism for the review of drug evaluation problems. On purely legal matters the Food and Drug Administration can be challenged in the courts, but on scientific issues there is no formal or effective appeal. And yet in matters involving the toxicity and efficacy of drugs the agency is called upon to administer not only the laws of man but the laws of science as well. If the FDA makes a ruling or an interpretation on a scientific point, it is almost certain to stand, even though the ruling is considered unsound in the opinion of competent scientists." After going on to point out that an appeal mechanism exists for government decisions on pesticides and color additives, Smith concluded: "It seems anomalous that the manufacturers of pesticide chemicals and of color additives have the right of appeal to an independent body, while the drug industry—which surely is as vital to the health of the American people—has no such right."

There is no doubt that PMA's view is widely shared. Smith spoke for the industry as a whole; but representatives of several drug firms have recently made statements indicating their individual support for the group proposal. References to the desirability of an appeal procedure have appeared frequently in the drug and medical trade press in the past few months. In addition, a plan almost identical to Smith's was suggested by I. S. Ravdin, vice-president of the University of Pennsylvania for medical affairs, in a letter to the *AMA News* last April, and formally endorsed by the Great Philadelphia Committee for Medical-Pharmaceutical Sciences, which is composed of representatives of the area's medical schools and drug companies. Ravdin said last week that his letter had also drawn a considerable mail response from independent practicing and academic physicians.

The interest in a scientific "court of appeals" grows out of two things—the fundamental dissatisfaction of the drug industry with what it feels is its sometimes cavalier treatment by the FDA, and an apparently widespread indignation over the recent handling by the FDA of an antidepressant drug called Parnate.

### Parnate Case

Parnate, a product of Smith, Kline & French Laboratories of Philadelphia, went on the market in February 1961 and quickly achieved considerable popularity for use in moderate to severe cases of mental depression. Although the drug's usual effect is to lower blood pressure, it was soon found that Parnate had the occasional "paradoxical" effect of raising blood pressure, and that it was associated with cases of arterial hypertension, with strokes, and with a small number of fatalities. In October 1963, the company and the government consulted and the company issued a warning letter to doctors which described the difficulties that had been encountered and cautioned physicians to be on the lookout for them. After the alert, reports of trouble continued to mount: by Feb-