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MOON 'DEADLINE' SEEN TOO EARLY

GOP Unit Fears Expensive, Wasteful Crash Program

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(Washington Bureau of The Sun)

Washington, May 27—The Critical Issues Council of the Republican Citizens Committee today recommended the United States drop the 1970 "deadline" for landing men on the moon.

The council, organized last year to report the views of a number of prominent Republicans on matters of national importance, approved the lunar landing project as a whole, but feared the effort might become a crash program that would be expensive and wasteful.

A national goal of landing Americans on the moon by the end of this decade was called for by the late President John F. Kennedy on May 25, 1961, in his second State-of-the-Union message for that year.

The Republican council said the present lunar program was "admittedly a project of considerable human interest," but was chiefly a "prestige item intended to win the man-to-moon race."

"Indeed, if this race is not won, or if a premature attempt involves loss of life, its prestige value largely vanishes," observed the council, headed by Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower, president of the Johns Hopkins University.

These considerations, coupled with the "deadline date" gives the project "the character of a 'crash' program," it was stated.

"This is increasingly true when the schedule slips, as is bound to happen in an undertaking of this novelty and complexity. Crash programs are notoriously expensive, wasteful and prone to premature execution.

"Thus the manned lunar landing project represents a challenge, to be sure, but we do not believe that the hoped-for psychological or propaganda advantages call for the present efforts to meet a publicized deadline, currently stated as prior to 1970.

"We find no reason to believe that putting men on the moon could contribute to our military strength. We see no evidence that urgent defense objectives warrant a crash program or that a meeting of deadlines such as 1970 serves any significant national objective.

"We urge, therefore, that such a deadline be dropped."

A Different View

A different view of the lunar schedule has been taken by James E. Webb, head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, in testimony before Congress.

Webb told the Senate Space Committee in March that if the moon program were carried over into the 1970's the cost of the project would increase approximately \$1,000,000,000 for each year of delay.

If the present schedule is adhered to, Webb testified, the job could be done for less than \$20,000,000,000.

The effects of a stretch-out were studied by NASA's Office of Manned Space Flight, Webb said.

"A three-year delay would cost \$3,000,000,000; a six-year delay, \$6,000,000,000, with no corresponding improvements in the benefits obtained," Webb declared.

5.3 Billion Asked

NASA has asked Congress for \$5,304,000,000 in the fiscal year which begins July 1. About \$2,677,000,000 of this total is for the Apollo lunar landing program.

The Republican council saw value in the moon voyage as an essential step toward possible trips to a neighboring planet, which it considered more worthwhile.

In another part of its report, the council expressed the belief that the United States has gained considerably more valuable prestige than has been realized from some other scientific space projects.