

Remarks by President Donald Trump at the Kennedy Space Center

May 30, 2020

We present here excerpts from President Trump's speech.

Those of us who saw the spectacular and unforgettable liftoff this afternoon watched more than an act of history; we watched an act of heroism. Every time our astronauts climb aboard a rocket—which is many, many stories of only engine and fuel—and vault across the sky, they display breathtaking valor.

What Colonel Douglas Hurley and Colonel Robert Behnken did this afternoon was pure American genius and courage. They joined the ranks of just seven prior American astronauts who have made the perilous maiden voyage to test a new class of spacecraft.

The names of Hurley and Behnken will stand in the history books alongside those of legends like Alan Shepard, Gus Grissom, John Young. Now these brave and selfless astronauts will continue their mission to advance the cause of human knowledge as they proceed to the International Space Station before returning to Earth. We wish them Godspeed on their journey and as one proud nation, we salute their fearless service....

For every citizen who has eagerly waited for America to reignite those engines of will, confidence and imagination that put a man on the Moon, I stand before you to say you need wait no longer.

Through NASA's Artemis program, the United States is preparing for a crewed mission to Mars. Earlier this week, I saw the Orion capsules being worked on in this building. As part of the Artemis Moon-to-Mars program, those capsules will soon return Americans to lunar orbit for the first time in over 50 years—half a century.

By 2024, our astronauts will return to the lunar surface to establish a permanent presence and the launching pad to Mars. And the first woman on the Moon will be an American woman. And the first nation to land on Mars will be the United States of America....

Exploration is a test of our values and of our faith. America is a nation defined by its commitment to discovery—to solve mysteries, to chart the unknown, to press the limits, to achieve the fullest expression of life's potential, and to ensure that America is the nation that always leads the way, and especially in space.

This evening, I am more confident than ever before that America stands poised to thrive in this grand undertaking. It's incredible. We are a nation of pioneers. We are the people who crossed the ocean, carved out a foothold on a vast continent, settled a great wilderness, and then set our eyes upon the stars. This is our history and this is our destiny.

Now, like our ancestors before us, we are venturing out to explore a new, magnificent frontier. It's called: space. Our most daring feats, our most epic journeys, our biggest adventures, and our finest days are just beginning. America's proudest moments are still ahead. We are on the verge of our most exciting years, and next year may be the most exciting of all. You just watch.

So today as our brave American astronauts shake the Earth and blaze a trail of fire and steel into the heavens, we proclaim for all to hear that we have not yet tested the full strength of the American character, and the world has not yet seen the full glory of the American spirit. For our country, for our children, and for humanity's march into the stars, the best is yet to come.

It was a great honor for me to deliver this speech. God bless our brave astronauts now soaring through the heavens. God bless the men and women of NASA and God bless America. Thank you very much.