

NEWS



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APOLLO 8 DECISION DUE

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration outlined today the steps that will lead to a final decision on the next Apollo manned mission in the week of Nov. 11.

Apollo 8, scheduled for December, is now planned as a manned Earth-orbital mission on a Saturn V launch vehicle. As a result of the success of Apollo 7, NASA is giving serious consideration to three alternative mission possibilities previously announced: an Earth-orbital mission deeper into space, a circumlunar fly-by, and a lunar orbit mission.

Dr. George E. Mueller, Associate Administrator for Manned Space Flight, and Lt. Gen. Samuel C. Phillips, Apollo Program Director, have laid out these steps leading to a decision:

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- Detailed analysis and review of the results of the Apollo 7 mission to determine whether any major spacecraft changes are necessary.

- Final certification of solutions to the problems encountered during the Apollo 6 unmanned flight last Spring. Modifications included strengthening of fuel lines in the second and third stages and elimination of objectionable oscillations or "pogo" in the first stage of the Saturn V.

- Complete ground tests (insulation, structural, pressure tests) before the Apollo 8 command and service modules are certified ready for lunar flight.

- Complete flight computer programs for deep space and lunar missions. Targeting must be checked out, the operational trajectory established, and the computer programs delivered to Kennedy Space Center, Fla., and verified.

- Rehearse command and service module operations through computer simulations of the Mission Control Center ground system, tests with mathematical models, and delivery of the computer program for the Apollo 8 command module.

- Complete design certification reviews of the launch vehicle and spacecraft subsystems.

"The final decision on whether to send Apollo 8 around the Moon will be made after a thorough assessment of the total risks involved and the total gains to be realized in this next step toward a manned lunar landing," said Dr. Thomas O. Paine, Acting Administrator. "We will fly the most advanced mission for which we are fully prepared that does not unduly risk the safety of the crew."