

EDITORIAL

For a National Space Day

Kesha Rogers addressed NASA Veterans and others in Houston on the 55th Anniversary of Americans in space, May 5, 2016.

Good evening everyone! I want to welcome those of you who are here today on behalf of the Schiller Institute, and thank you for joining us tonight. My name is Kesha Rogers, and I am a former Democratic nominee for Congress and member of the LaRouche PAC Policy Committee.

I continue to campaign nationally in the efforts to defend our space program against egregious attacks and the cuts in funding, including our manned space program. I continue to rally the scientific community and the population, starting with those who witnessed and were engaged—to the great benefit of the country and the world—in the developments of our space program, and have been inspired by the space program. I want to rally the scientific community to again be an inspiration to Americans and to the world in advancing the fight for our future in space.

After these brief remarks, the plan for tonight is just to get feedback from all of you—to have members of the scientific community and the others who are here tonight, particularly the scientific community, share your experiences and say what we can do to inspire the population again to recognize that the space program is our future, and that we desperately need to save it and bring it back again.

I hope this meeting will be a stepping stone to something much greater: I would like to have a larger conference to advocate a National Space Day here in the United States, centered around our first Moon landing. So we have to go out and organize the population and our political figures as to why that is absolutely critical today.

We are here tonight to celebrate a great achievement 55 years ago today. Today is the anniversary of the beginning of America's venture into space. As many of you know, May 5, 1961 was the day that American astronaut Alan Shepard made a 15-minute suborbital flight into space on the Freedom 7 spacecraft. He was the second man in space, following Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin.

Shepard had been chosen as one of the first seven astronauts for NASA, who were brought into the Mercury 7 mission. The mission was announced on April 9, 1957. Probably most of you in this room can name the other six astronauts. Anyone in this room who worked with any of the seven,— I would like to hear those stories.

Without Vision, the People Perish

We inspired Americans, and we inspired the world. On April 9, 1957, when the Mercury 7 mission was announced on national television, it was a great stepping stone for all the world to see. When John Glenn became the first American in Earth orbit in 1962, there again, the population was there to see and celebrate. And the remarkable feat that came about from all of the accomplishments and hard work and commitment to this great vision—and to the great visionaries—was that America became the first to land a man on the Moon. Despite all the odds, we realized the challenge of President John F. Kennedy on July 20, 1969. Kennedy had called for landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth. This is something, again, that the entire world rejoiced in, and it was looked at as a great advance for all of mankind.

So I find again, that it's very fitting, for people who don't know, that when the Apollo 11 mission—of Neil

Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and one of my favorites, Michael Collins (whom we don't want to leave out!)—went to the Moon, the plaque that the astronauts left there read: “We came in peace for all mankind.”

That should be, once again, our mission, to come in peace for all mankind. And that should be the mission of our space program.

In a statement published in our *Executive Intelligence Review*, titled “A Unified Mission for the Common Aims of Mankind,” I call on the scientific community to restore its commitment to the future of our nation in the exploration of space. This is not going to be done with cheap gimmicks, but only through real leadership. There are a lot of cheap gimmicks going on out there; people want to make side-cuts, thinking that we can turn the space program into some kind of marketplace, or going into space and making it a tourist attraction or amusement park. And that is not what our space program represents.

We need the type of leadership to fight for our space program that President John F. Kennedy represented, or visionary leaders like Krafft Ehrlicke, who was a great space pioneer, and someone whom I often mention, who recognized that space was a mission for mankind: That it was our prerogative, and our duty to our own species, to advance beyond Earth and go out into the Solar System, because this is where we are going to learn how to improve our conditions here on planet Earth and how to better understand our own creative powers as human beings. Because, as Ehrlicke said, there is nothing and no one under the stars, that can put limitations on mankind, except mankind himself. And I think that is absolutely true: We have to stop putting the limitations on ourselves, and to actually start to move forward with our mission in the conquest of space.

Kennedy said, quoting *Proverbs* 29, that where there is no vision the people perish. Now, I have to tell you, “perishing” is just the direction we are heading in under this collapsing financial system, and under the direction of the current administration—the collapsing trans-Atlantic financial system and the push for total war and chaos that we're seeing right now.

Right now we are in a complete slide into war. We are continuing the escalation toward war against some of our great allies—against China, by putting aircraft carriers and missile defense systems right on its borders and on the borders of Russia. This is a problem! Because we should be committing ourselves to collaborat-

ing as human beings, in the fight for increasing the understanding of who we are as human beings.

And that is what the space program represents. It's very interesting that on April 24, China celebrated its first National Space Day, joining with Russia, which celebrates on April 12 the first man in space, Yuri Gagarin. As I said in my statement, the United States right now is “spaced out.” We don't have a Space Day, we have people who are completely spaced out. [laughter]

We do not remember that our nation was once an inspiration for the world! Now, we're bullies to the world and the world is afraid of us, because instead of inspiring, we're starting wars, causing economic collapse, and wanting to be the great hegemonic world power. And that's not what the United States represented under the vision of Kennedy or Franklin Roosevelt, or that of our Founding Fathers and Alexander Hamilton. That's the nation we need again today.

Why a National Space Day?

Why is it that China and Russia have a Space Day? It is not just to celebrate an individual event or an individual person. They are celebrating their respective national Space Days because they want to celebrate the achievements of a nation and its commitment to the future of mankind, to those children not yet born, to the advances in science that have yet to be made, the advances and discoveries that still await us. That is why we must have a National Space Day.

What we have already achieved is the landing of a man on the Moon. Now China is going to do something even more remarkable: It is going to be the first nation to put a spacecraft on the far side of the Moon. Think about that one! They're calling for the development of helium-3 mining on the Moon. The United States has to renew its commitment. China's announcement of its plan to land a spacecraft on the far side of the Moon should be a wake-up call to the United States that we should be joining in this effort. But we have insane politicians who say we shouldn't be working with China in space. This is going to set us back a long way! We've got to push for leadership to fight now to reverse the policy that the United States should not be working with nations such as China.

I have just been reading Gene Kranz's book. If you haven't seen this, it is very,—it's called *Failure Is Not an Option: Mission Control from Mercury to Apollo*

and Beyond. In this book, Kranz is talking about the commitment and the fight led by members of our space program at the time, in the Apollo mission and so forth, against the ending of the Apollo mission. And against those who said then, as they do today, “Oh, we don’t have the resources for that, we don’t have the money to go into space.”

You know, that’s just all lies! Because we have the money to build more nuclear arsenal, we have billions of dollars for more bailouts for the financial looters, and we have money for more wars. And, as you know, when the Apollo mission was being attacked, we were increasing spending on the Vietnam War, which itself was taking away the vision. This came about in the wake of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

After President Kennedy was killed, there was a fight to keep his commitment alive. But today we see that it’s been completely ripped apart. China is now committing itself to landing on the far side of the Moon. Do you guys know that we had this as a mission? There were people working with Kranz, working with former astronaut Harrison Schmitt, who were actually putting together plans for the United States to be the first to land on the far side of the Moon! Schmitt, of the Apollo 17 mission, was one of the leading advocates for the United States to do this and for the United States to realize the importance of mining helium-3 on the Moon.

‘I Felt Betrayed’

But those efforts were defeated. And given the direction in which we are now going, under the current policy of the administration, it may not be able to be realized. We have to actually fight for a commitment to a unified national mission again. The Moon is just the place to do that. Most nations right now recognize that, including India, which has just also announced its commitment to development and research for mining of helium-3 on the Moon. And most nations recognize that the development of the lunar surface, as I said, is the key to the success of *any* type of further mission in space, including the Mars mission, or a mission to any other planetary body.

I have a paragraph from Gene Kranz’s book that I

want to read. In the course of describing the fight around the ending of the Apollo mission, Kranz says:

The space program was also suffering. The lunar program was coming to an end. With the cancellations of the last Apollo missions—18, 19, and 20—I felt betrayed. It was as if Congress was ripping our heart out, gutting the program we had fought so hard to build. Leadership is fragile. It is more a matter of mind and heart than resources, and it seemed that we no longer had the heart for those things that demanded discipline, commitment, and risk.

It is very true today. There are many new developments—in terms of the direction the world is taking right now—that I can speak on today, and there are probably some that you here can tell me about as well. Particularly regarding nations like China, Russia, and India, that have committed themselves to the advance of mankind in space,— this is the economic driver for the world. This has to be the economic driver once again for the United States. And I think we have to realize that it is in our national interest and the interest of the world that we, the United States, commit ourselves again to a unified national mission in the exploration of space. I think that we can do it, if we just choose to fight.

So I will stop there. What I hope to hear from you is where you see the future of our nation, and how we can actually come together and make sure that we rally the American people to recognize that this is their future. This is not just some side issue here. It is something that I have been fighting for, for some time—probably not as long as some of you. We need to get people to realize that the whole political spectrum right now is just a joke! If you are not talking about this, if there are not meetings and discussions from political candidates, the Presidential candidates, about the future of our nation in space, what are you talking about?

So that’s what we should discuss here today, and I think the message will get around. And you should tell all your friends, “Hey, somebody’s fighting.” So, what do you have?