

MEMORANDUM

August 22, 1996

TO: Secretary Rumsfeld  
FROM: Dave Smith  
SUBJECT: Mars

Following NASA's announcement that life might have existed on Mars, the White House went looking for a Mars initiative, the scientific people who would have had to craft its details were put on "red alert" and there was considerable speculation that Clinton would announce a manned Mars mission at the Democratic Convention. In the intervening time, there appears to have been something of a stand down and the steps necessary for a quick announcement do not appear to be being taken. This memo was prepared at the time that the Mars Mission appeared likely; we should keep it in the drawer just in case.

**If Clinton announces anything less than a manned Mars mission -- for example, a sample recovery mission -- it's not big news.**

-- The US has been sending probes to Mars for two decades; In his remarks last week, Clinton pointed out that long planned probe missions to Mars will be launched in November and December.

-- All Clinton has done is slow down this effort. Due to his cuts and de-emphasis of planetary exploration, the Mars program today is a series of small underfunded programs.

-- Now Clinton is trying to capitalize on the public's renewed interest in Mars by announcing yet another probe mission -- it's just not news.

**If Clinton announces a manned Mars mission, he is somewhat vulnerable, however, the record of the Republican Congress is not great either.**

-- It takes just a microbe -- literally -- to get Clinton to parrot Republican positions!

-- That's right, some 3.6 billion year old fossilized microbes set Clinton's White House politicians searching for a way to capitalize on America's understandable interest in the possible discovery of life on primeval Mars.

-- Oh, they'll deny it, but Clinton (has) (is) simply warm(ed)(ing) up George Bush's Space Exploration Initiative.

-- "I believe that before Apollo celebrates the 50th anniversary of its landing on the Moon, the American flag should be planted on Mars." Who said it? George Bush, describing the Space Exploration Initiative he launched on July 20, 1989, the 20th anniversary of America's historic Moon Landing.

-- "A daydream as splashy as a George Lucas movie." "absurdity." "irresponsible." "Before a mission to Mars, I think the Administration needs a mission to reality." Who said it? Al Gore!

-- The fact is that Clinton and Gore have done nothing but stymie America's planetary exploration program.

-- Clinton and Gore had nothing to do with last week's possible discovery. Meteorite AH-84001 was picked up in Antarctica in 1984 and analyzed under the auspices of the Johnson Space Center over the ensuing twelve years. Clinton was not briefed until July 30 of this year.

-- Maybe if Clinton had been aware of the Martian microbes earlier, he would not have compiled such a dismal record on space.

--- Clinton abolished the National Space Council immediately upon taking office.

--- Clinton was the first president in 21 years to request a decrease in NASA funding.

--- Clinton slashed space science funding and even proposed ending it as NASA's primary area of research.

--- Under Clinton's plan, funding for probes to explore planets like Mars would have been slashed 25%, from 1995 to 2000. Congressional Republicans, led by Pennsylvania's Bob Walker, are right now fighting to insure adequate funding for this vital NASA function.

-- And the Clinton Administration's record stands on a foundation constructed of much the same stuff by Gore when he presided over the Senate Committee which oversees NASA.

-- In explaining his Space Exploration Initiative, President Bush said, "we cannot take the next giant leap for mankind tomorrow unless we take a single step today." It was a goal, a framework in which each step would lay the groundwork for the next step, culminating in a manned mission to Mars in 30 years. Details and costing were offered for the near term but were obviously not possible for the later years.

-- Instead of helping with the first steps toward a goal worthy of the nation which put men on the Moon, Senator Gore engaged in partisan grandstanding, harping on meaningless dollar figures which some people advanced for the entire 30 year endeavor.

-- In fact, the Initiative was to have begun with a low cost study to begin identifying the innovative technologies and engineering techniques which would make the Mars Mission possible and affordable.

-- Senator Gore cut, cut again, and finally zeroed, the Initiative.

-- It won't wash! Clinton and Gore are not leading; they have not studied, costed or sought international partners for a manned Mars mission; they're just following this week's headlines.

-- Dole and Kemp believe in the American dream, the American technology, the American skill which took us to the moon and will take us to Mars and beyond.

-- Dole and Kemp will restore the National Space Council and charge it with drafting a reasonable plan for planetary exploration.

-- Dole and Kemp will return space science to its historic bipartisan place as NASA's first scientific priority.

-- Dole and Kemp will revitalize the space program which seized the imagination of four generations of Americans.

-- Dole and Kemp will lead America into the future, energize our youth and insure the continued benefit of countless scientific breakthroughs.

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## Gore Quotes

For once, George Bush may have had a vision, but its absurdity became apparent as cost estimates for a mission to the Moon and Mars were put at anywhere from \$100 to \$400 billion. (Goddard Space Flight Center on Monday, October 19, 1992)

While saying it is a worthy long-term goal, he said it was irresponsible to propose such a costly effort while the federal government is \$4 trillion in debt. (Same speech, Oct 19; Aviation Week & Space Technology October 26, 1992; Pg 74; Vol. 137, No. 17)

"a daydream as splashy as a George Lucas movie." ( Bush Urges Commitment To New Space Exploration; Objectives Include Moon Base, Mars Mission. The Washington Post, July 21, 1989)

Sen. Al Gore (D.-Tenn.), who supports the Moon/Mars initiative but wants international participation, told Aldrich at a hearing, "This is not a realistic plan-- \$500 billion with no indication of how it's going to be financed. Before a mission to Mars, I think the Administration needs a mission to reality." (Aviation Week & Space Technology May 7, 1990; Pg 21)