

Contract of Nationalism between Space Mission from Cold War to Trump Administration

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Abstract. The American government has made it known that future space initiatives are necessary and that unilateral space missions may be possible during Donald Trump's administration. This change is a significant break from previous practices because, particularly since the Cold War, American political discourse on space during the ISS (International Space Station) era has tended to encourage international cooperation. This research explores the relationship between American nationalism and space, offering an explanation for why the relevance of space exploration has changed over time from the 1960s to 2019. One of the key components of American national identity, space technology is employed to highlight and strengthen national might. This article will contrast how nationalism was practiced during these three eras of American history: the Cold War space race, the international space station era and Trump's administration. In the face of an equal "challenger," a fantastic nation is depicted using a spectacular set of technology.

Keywords: Space mission; nationalism; space technologies; space race; ISS.

1. Introduction

During Donald Trump's presidency, the U.S. government has publicly announced the necessity of future outer space programs and indicated the possibility of unilateral space missions. This is demonstrated by President Trump's desire to form the U.S. Space Force, his decision to travel to Mars, and his increased use of the phrase "American frontier" in relation to space. This shift marks a clear departure from prior practices, as U.S. political discourse on space during the ISS (the International Space Station) era tended to promote international cooperation ever since the Cold War.

The question of how and why these achievements were made is probably more nuanced; was the development of space technology driven by a desire for increased scientific knowledge, military power, or as a matter of national prestige? In a time when both the United States and the Soviet Union were pushing their own agendas and political interests onto the world—the U.S. trying to influence western Europe to be sympathetic to American freedom and capitalism (first-world countries), and the USSR building their sphere of influence in the East (second-world country)—issues of spaceflight and technology became primarily about trying to outdo the other rival.

Outer space is a theoretically incredibly alluring place within nationalism, particularly U.S. nationalism. Due to the pioneering attitude involved in researching the otherworldly, it has the ability to exhibit great character. As a domain, outer space has unique symbolic and prestige value. In this view, it seems obvious that anyone who wants to create or unify a nation—which is the ultimate goal of nationalism—will prioritize space activities if they have the resources and ability to do so. All of the nations that can currently be differentiated have gone through their own nation-building processes and have their own unique, invented traditions on space missions and space discoveries. This is most visibly demonstrated in the case of the United States by the "American dream," the frontier theory, and manifest destiny through the competition between nations [1]. As was the case with the Eastern ideological conflict, particularly with China, nationalism is always provoked by another. The fact that the United States possessed a clear military superiority over its hypothetical foe from the outset of the battle stopped a similar revival of nationalist space exploration goals.

This study examines the connection between U.S. nationalism and space, providing an explanation for why there have been variations in the significance of space exploration between the 1960s and 2019. Space technology is used to demonstrate and enhance national strength, and it is viewed as one of the core elements of U.S. national identity. This study will compare the usage of nationalism in

three different periods of U.S. history: the Cold War space race, the International Space Station era and the usage during the Trump Administration.

2. Cold War Space Race

Nationalism made a huge impact during the Cold War space race. Two of the most enduring effects of the early Cold War that are still recognized today are the rivalries between the United States of America and the Soviet Union and the ensuing competition between them as each side strove to outdo the other in space technology achievements. The invention of satellites, the development of rockets to launch them, and the difficulties associated with putting a man on the moon all occurred during this early Cold War era. The United States had believed they were in the leadership of the free, Western world at the start of the Cold War because they believed their liberal institutions were superior and that their influence over Europe was expanding. While Sputnik may have started out in a scientific setting, the process of building the satellites swiftly evolved into one of bragging about one's accomplishments and working quickly to achieve the cherished goal of being the first. So, when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1 and 2 in October and November of 1957, the U.S. perceived this as a threat that the Soviet Union possessed superior missile technology, and because of this, began the Cold War space race [2].

November 25th of the same year, the Senate Armed Services Committee, chaired by Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson, started a hearing lasting six weeks on the technology gap between the two superpowers [2]. In response to the threat of the Soviet Union's leading missile technologies, the U.S. government aspired to establish a premier space program to project influence for the American people both worldwide and locally. However, the U.S. feared the Domino Theory, which defined Communism as an "infection" to more and more countries, and in order to maintain itself as the world's largest power, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was formally established in 1958. Although NASA has full government support, it has been challenging for NASA to garner public support for its space exploration agenda, despite growing reports on the capabilities of space and the Soviet Union's accomplishments in this field [1]. In order to gain public support for the space war against the Soviet Union, Kennedy delivered a speech in Houston at Rice University in 1962, the location of NASA's human space flight center. As Kennedy put it, "What was once the furthest outpost on the old frontier of the West would be the furthest outpost on the new frontier of science and space" [3]. An influx of jobs in science and engineering was required to reinvigorate and give prominence to this area. Kennedy's slogan "New Frontier" was brought up several times during the speech to emphasize the importance of the American Dream and American Nationalism.

All these allusions to the past and future frontiers sparked a sense of patriotism and duty to maintain American leadership in space, until Apollo 11 successfully scoured the first men, American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin, to land on the moon in July 1969 [4]. Five hundred twenty-eight million people worldwide watched the momentous event, and as a result, it was widely acknowledged that the U.S. had established its American Nationalist dream—superiority in space [1]. Outer space theories are an incredibly alluring area within nationalism, particularly U.S. nationalism. Due to the pioneering attitude involved in researching the otherworldly, it has the ability to exhibit great character. Additionally, it offers a chance to highlight amazing technological advances, as was done, for instance, with the 1969 moon landing. As a domain, outer space has unique symbolic and prestigious value. In this view, it appears obvious that the majority who wants to create or unify a nation, which is the ultimate goal of nationalism, prioritizes action in outer space, provided they have the resources and capacities to do so.

3. International Space Era

According to the widely accepted account of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the United States were involved in a bitter rivalry that was frequently fueled by ideological disagreements as well as national pride. Even though the space race ended, the policies and purpose of space missions remained the same after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In these policies and purposes, Rigter defined five themes that indicated nationalism in the space narrative stretching from President Eisenhower to Obama: rivalry, prestige, leadership, collaboration, and a "new paradigm" [1]. As an overarching theme, rivalry, like that with the Soviet Union, spurs competition to exceed another spacefaring country. The language that extols space travel as an effective way to boost national status and power is known as prestige. Then, space exploration becomes a status symbol. Leadership, however, refers to declarations that explain how the U.S. government either already plays a leadership role in space or aspires to do so. Collaboration shows whether working with other international space agencies and entities is possible or is a goal. The last subject, "New Paradigm," is a story about a new era of space exploration with many new characters and new capacities instead of bilateral warfare.

Among those themes, rivalry, prestige, and leadership are the elements of nationalism that apply in the U.S., as shown by the idea that space is a new frontier for American exploration, which is most prominent, especially during the International Space Station era. With the participation of five space agencies and fifteen nations, the International Space Station is frequently recognized as the largest, most expensive, most technically complex international, technological, and scientific undertaking to date. In accordance with their financial or material commitments, space agencies are given particular time allocations for astronaut and research activities. As a result, Americans have made up more than half of all astronauts who have ever visited the ISS [1]. The ISS, based on NASA, has three main goals in terms of science and technology: (1) work on the long-term effects of low gravity environments on the human body and radiation protection, (2) the provision of comprehensive space-based research capabilities on plantlife as well as in the areas of microbiology, physics, and anatomy, and (3) observation of Earth, the Sun, and other celestial bodies. The Mars immigration plan is a well-known example of this [5]. However, any joint agenda was implemented in accordance with a set of rules that, by designating NASA as the "project manager," essentially gave the U.S. complete control over goals and advancement. In order to move forward with plans for an international space station, the U.S. government had to decide whether to partially transfer certain aspects of leadership and prestige in space exploration or advance unilaterally and run the risk of depleting the available resources or being overtaken by rival spacefaring nations.

Based on these arguments, the space station Freedom (former name of the ISS) would "provide a foundation for leadership in the free world, and for international cooperation in space for the next decade and beyond," according to a presidential report on aviation and space activities published by NASA in 1985 [1]. As long as the U.S. is in charge, space exploration remains a human destiny. However, during this time, the U.S. space mission progressively changed from a military and political perspective to an economic and technological one. As a result of the absence of a viable rival, nationalism with regard to space was substantially lower during the time of the International Space Station. In contrast to the Cold War era, when nationalism and the desire to prevail in times of war dictated space exploration, the ISS era is characterized by the desire to sustain such leadership.

4. Trump Administration

During Trump's Administration, the notion that space is an "American frontier," which was prevalent during the Cold War, returned on both a societal and governmental level. Space exploration has gained popularity recently as a result of an increase in spacefaring governments, the relevance of space-enabled technologies like GPS and espionage, the entry of private corporations interested in tourism, spaceflight, and planet colonization, and several other factors. Donald Trump has made it known that new policies are needed, mainly in relation to how the U.S. would participate in future space activities. Trump officially declared the establishment of the U.S. Space Force (USSF) as the

sixth branch of the armed forces in December 2019. "American space superiority is extremely essential," Trump said in his speech announcing the formation of the USSF, "we are in the lead, but not by enough" [6]. The Space Development Agency and the Space Operations Forces are two examples of this. The Space Force would include parts of the Army Space and Missile Defense Command, the Navy Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, the Space Development Agency, the Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, and others [7]. Notably, Trump brought up the possibility of space technology being used in the military by using the American dream and American pride, saying that "space has so much to do with so many other applications, including a military application. So we are the leader and we're going to stay the leader, and we're going to increase it many-fold" [8]. Trump has given the impression several times that China was posing a threat to American dominance in space technology.

Nationalism is always sparked by another, as was the case with the Eastern ideological battle, especially with China. The fact that the U.S. had a proven military advantage over its fictitious adversary from the commencement of the fight prevented a similar return to nationalist ambitions of space exploration from being sparked by this conflict. It was essentially an ideological vertical and asymmetrical conflict in which U.S. forces were always superior, and their technological prowess was not questioned. Additionally, the U.S.'s technological dominance is once again contested by China's economic and technological advancements [9]. Comparing Trump's approach to Rigger's definition of the two goals of "othering" reveals that China is used as a convenient scapegoat for the U.S.'s economic woes. Thus, China has been cast in the role of an outside adversary, which would give rise to nationalism in the U.S. because having an external enemy reinforces an insider's superior sense of national identity. When survey results from 2017 and 2019 are compared, it is clear that Americans now see China at a record-high 60 percent less positively than they did in 2017 [10]. China's portrayal by Trump as a "danger to the world" is a persistent narrative that has been revived during the 2020 reelection campaign, despite the fact that it frequently changes from friend to opponent.

As part of the first space plan since the Cold War space competition, Trump declares that "the United States will lead the return of humans to the Moon for long-term exploration and utilization, followed by human expeditions to Mars and other destinations" [11]. This is the first space-related political strategy that sought to send humans to a different planet since the Cold War space race used it as a weapon or strategy to keep superiority in space. The Space Policy Directives announce a program of space exploration that involves sending manned missions to Mars in the future and sending astronauts back to the moon. As a result, Space Policy Directive 1 departs from the goals set forth in the 2010 Space Policy released by the Obama Administration, namely to send men to a near-Earth asteroid by 2025 (under the Asteroid Redirect Mission, or ARM) and to Mars by the middle of 2030 [12]. The development of strategies to return to the Moon first in order to test the capabilities and technology required for a mission to Mars is currently the focus of the nation in an effort to remain powerful and superior. This illustrates a rebirth of nationalism in terms of space, as seen by President Trump's establishment of the U.S. Space Force, the decision to go to Mars, and more frequent references to space as an "American frontier."

5. Conclusion

The American government has made it known that future space initiatives are necessary and that unilateral space missions may be possible during Donald Trump's administration. President Trump's ambition to establish the U.S. Space Force, his decision to visit Mars, and his increased use of the term "American frontier" in regard to space are examples of this. This change is a significant break from previous practices because, particularly since the Cold War, American political discourse on space during the ISS (International Space Station) era has tended to encourage international cooperation.

Answering the question, was space technology fueled by a desire for greater scientific understanding, military prowess, or as a factor of national prestige? Space competition had a significant impact on nationalism ever since the Cold War. The rivalries between the United States of America and the Soviet Union, as well as the accompanying space race between them in which each side sought to outdo the other in spaceflight achievements, are two of the early Cold War's most enduring legacies that are still recognized today. Competition is a key factor of nationalism throughout history. The fact that the United States possessed a clear military superiority over its hypothetical foe from the outset of the battle stopped a similar revival of nationalist space exploration goals. It was primarily an ideologically vertical, asymmetrical conflict in which American forces consistently outclassed their adversaries and were unchallenged in terms of technology. Once the supremacy of leadership on technology was challenged, the threat was revealed.

This outcome becomes more obvious in comparison to the International Space Station era and the severe change during Trump's administration. During the time of the International Space Station, a comparable resurgence of nationalist space exploration goals was thwarted by the fact that the United States had a glaring military advantage over its fictitious adversary from the commencement of the conflict. American forces routinely excelled their foes and had no technological challenges in what was largely an ideologically vertical, asymmetrical struggle. China's recent economic and technological developments have challenged the U.S.'s technological superiority once again. Consequently, China has been portrayed as an external foe, which would encourage nationalism in the United States because having an external foe strengthens an insider's superior sense of national identity. This is demonstrated by President Trump's desire to form the U.S. Space Force, his decision to travel to Mars, and his increased use of the phrase "American frontier" in relation to space.

Based on this study, the influence of nationalism on space technology is huge. "Challengers" to the U.S. superiority and global hegemony shape the path of U.S. nationalism, which affects space narratives and policies. In order to project national might and advance a superior national identity, it became crucial to demonstrate leadership and prestige. When the Soviet Union Launched Sputnik, it threatened the technological hegemony of the U.S. and sparked a period of competition in space. China's current top-down framing as an economic threat to the U.S. coincides with large-scale unilateral U.S. space missions, similar to how nationalist views of spaces as a "American frontier" are increasingly highlighted in political narratives in this matter.

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