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INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND NATIONAL STRATEGY: HISTORICAL CASE
STUDIES IN COOPERATION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING.

Abstract

From interplanetary space science missions to human spaceflight, international cooperation in outer space is an enabler of space exploration, capacity building between new and old space actors, and the development of consensus standards. Many have argued over the years that outer space exploration and coordination has been a critical component in diplomatic relations that supports both national and international geopolitical strategies. But as we move away from the Cold War, international cooperation in outer space has not only fostered relationships within the political context, but has generated opportunities to develop scientific and technical consensus standards on the international level while also developing short and long-term space exploration strategies on the national level. This essay seeks to explore different historical case studies in international space cooperation. Recent shifts have prioritized a return to lunar missions (both human and robotic) within the United States, while the European Space Agency has announced a clear interest in developing a moon village. While the US and ESA are clearly not the only actors developing plans for lunar exploration, the focus of this paper will be on historical case studies that examine US – European collaboration efforts. International cooperation in outer space is a complex and sophisticated process that needs to be further understood in order to fully take advantage of the opportunities that will come ahead. Furthermore, focusing on case studies will not only highlight the successes, but reveal the many challenges that follow differing national political, economic, and societal priorities. This unique perspective of international cooperation in space will reveal a more thorough and fundamental understanding of the relationship between building national space programs and creating international standards.