NASA’s Strategic Direction and the Need for a National Consensus
TASKED BY CONGRESS (THRU NASA INSPECTOR GENERAL)

- NASA’s strategic direction (thru “2011 NASA Strategic Plan”)
- Relevance to national priorities
- Viability in context of constrained budgets
- Appropriateness of resource allocations among programs
- Organizational structure and infrastructure
- How to establish and communicate a unifying vision
- **NOT** asked what should be NASA’s strategic goals and objectives
Committee Membership

- ALBERT CARNESALE, University of California, Los Angeles, Chair
- RONALD M. SEGA, Colorado State Univ. and Ohio State Univ., Vice Chair
- MARK R. ABBOTT, Oregon State University
- JACQUES E. BLAMONT, Centre National d’Etudes Spatiales
- JOHN C. BROCK, Northrup Grumman Space Technology (retired)
- ROBERT L. CRIPPMEN, Thiokol Propulsion Group (retired)
- JOSEPH S. HEZIR, EOP Group, Inc.
- ANN R. KARAGOZIAN, University of California, Los Angeles
- MARK J. LEWIS, Institute for Defense Analysis Science and Technology Policy Institute
- MARCIA S. SMITH, Space and Technology Policy Group, LLC
- MICHAEL S. TURNER, Kavli Institute for Cosmological Physics, The University of Chicago
- WARREN M. WASHINGTON, National Center for Atmospheric Research
Schedule

• Contract Start Date: January 15, 2012
• Committee Appointed: April 16, 2012
• Meeting 1, Washington, D.C.: May 1-2, 2012
• Site Visits to all NASA Centers: June-August, 2012
• Meeting 4, Irvine, CA: August 6-7, 2012
• Meeting 5, Los Angeles, CA: September 20-21, 2012
• Final Report Released (prepub): December 5, 2012
• Final Report To Be Published: January 3, 2012 - VERY FAST!
FINDINGS

• NASA makes important contributions to national priorities

• The 2011 Strategic Plan and associated documents do not constitute a strategy
  • No priorities
  • No guidance for resource allocation
  • No broad agreement on asteroid vs. moon vs. Mars

• Severe mismatches among programs, structure, staffing, and funding
  • Overall
  • Budget allocation among programs; e.g. human spaceflight vs. all others, especially aeronautics
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Form national consensus on strategic goals and objectives
• NASA, in consultation with Administration and Congress, develop strategy and plans
  – To provide basis for resource allocations
  – Must be consistent with realistic funding projections
  – Must markedly reduce mismatch between program, portfolio and funding; e.g. thru
    • Efficiency, especially staffing and infrastructure
    • Partnerships with other U.S. agencies, industry, and other nations
    • Increased funding (unlikely)
    • Reduce and/or eliminate some programs
• Manage NASA as an integrated system
  – Requires flexibility in workforce and infrastructure
  – Include managing partnerships
• Explore opportunities for leadership through international partnerships
How has the report been received?

Congress expects NASA and the White House to follow through on what Hutchison called “a hard-fought congressional and administration consensus” reached in 2010. That deal passed into law in late 2010 requires NASA to pursue both commercial space development and government development of a new heavy-lift rocket and crew capsule.
How has the report been received?

According to a March 21, 2013 post in Space Politics, Bolden’s one word answer to the question was, "No."

Bolden did acknowledge that the meager budgets that NASA is being given have proved to be a challenge. He stated that the situation would never change, so that the space agency would have to deal with doing much with few resources by “being smarter.”

The National Research Council report also asked if he agreed with the conclusions of the National Research Council that there was no support for the asteroid mission mandated by President Obama and that there was no consensus about what America’s space goals are.
How has the report been received?