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APOLLO PROGRAM CHANGES

NASA Acting Administrator Thomas O. Paine announced today that Lunar Module operations will be dropped from the first manned Apollo-Saturn V flight, Apollo 8.

Dr. Paine also stated that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Office of Manned Space Flight will begin planning for an alternate manned Command and Service Module mission for launch in December.

Dr. Paine emphasized that no final decision will be made on the precise mission plan for the alternate flight until after the first manned Apollo flight (Apollo 7) this Fall. Apollo 7 is a mission of up to 10 days' duration to complete flight qualification of the Command and Service Modules.

To assure greatest value from the mission, planning and training for Apollo 8 must begin in the period before the Apollo 7 mission is flown but the final content of the mission plan will be selected only after Apollo 7 mission results are evaluated.

Lunar Module 3, which has been delayed in checkout, will be flown next year on the fourth Saturn V (AS 504) with Command and Service Modules No. 104. This decision is based on preliminary studies which indicate that many Apollo program objectives scheduled for later flights can be attained by utilizing the Apollo 8 Command Service Module mission.

Lt. Gen. Samuel Phillips, Apollo Program Director, said one very important advantage of flying Apollo 8 this year is the opportunity for earlier experience in the operation of the Saturn V and Command and Service Modules than can otherwise be obtained.

Two problems previously experienced in the Saturn Apollo systems -- vertical oscillation or "POGO effect" in the first stage of the Saturn V and the rupture of small propellant lines in the upper stages -- have been corrected and the solutions verified in extensive ground tests.