Civilian Space Stations and the U.S. Future in Space

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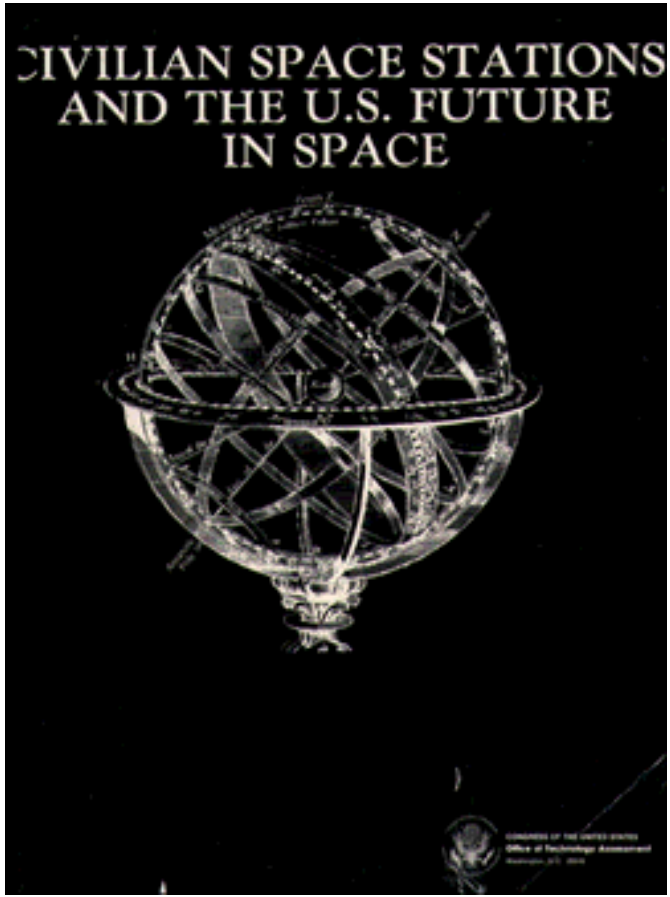

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Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the OTA assessment of Civilian *Space Stations and the U.S. Future in Space.* This study was requested by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House Committee on Science and Technology, and the request was endorsed by the Senate Committee on Appropriations and the House Committee on the Budget.

The study was designed to cover not only the essential technical issues surrounding the selection and acquisition of infrastructure in space, but to enable Congress to look beyond these matters to the larger context; the *direction* of our efforts. Given the vast capability and promise available to the country and the world because of the sophisticated space technology we now possess, equally sophisticated and thoughtful decisions must be made about where the U.S. space program is going, and for what purposes.

The Advisory Panel for this study played a role of unusual importance in helping to generate a set of possible space goals and objectives that demonstrate the diverse opportunities open to us at this time, and OTA thanks them for their productive commitment of time and energy. Their participation does not necessarily constitute consensus or endorsement of the content of the report, for which OTA bears sole responsibility.

It often happens that information generated during the course of an OTA study can be used as legislation moves through Congress. A number of statements presented in Senate and House hearings by OTA and a technical memorandum drawn from the analysis have already contributed to the course of the debate. This report, the culmination of the OTA process, is now a resource for both Congress and the National Commission on Space, which Congress has created in order to give full and fundamental review to the basic questions of charting our course. It is OTA'S hope that the publication of the study will also expand the circle of those who can effectively engage in the debate and contribute to the decision process.

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OTA appreciates the valuable assistance and thoughtful comments provided by advisory panel members at many points during the assessment. OTA, however, accepts sole responsibility for the views expressed in this report.

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