

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON THE SPACE STATION PROJECT

In January, 1984 the President of the United States invited America's friends and allies to participate in a project to construct a space station that would become operational in the mid-1990s. Canada, the European member countries of the European Space Agency and Japan, which are now called "partners," responded readily to the invitation. A year later, through their space agencies, they concluded separate memoranda of understanding with the United States covering the preliminary phase of the project.

About a year ago, the representatives of the governments themselves began negotiations aimed at reaching agreements on the principles governing the development, construction, placing in orbit and operation of the space station. New memoranda of understanding between agencies would be signed to set the terms and conditions governing application of these agreements, although these memoranda would be closely tied in with the intergovernmental agreements.

The Canadian contribution will include a way station integrated with the space station infrastructure, in which Canada's remote manipulator arm, already made famous by its exploits on the space shuttle, will play a crucial part. Each of the other partners will supply a module that will dock alongside the impressive tubular infrastructure built by the United States.