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Report outlines five-year plan for Canadian space program

Canada's interest in and use of space systems have grown slowly but assuredly over the past two decades and for reasons of geography and demography are expected to continue to develop in the foreseeable future, according to a Federal Government discussion paper outlining proposals for Canada's space program for the next five years. Excerpts from the report, The Canadian Space Program; Five-Year Plan (80/81-84/85) follow:

Because of the high economic and social dividends which can result from the effective and rational use of space technology, the high cost of satellite systems and the need to keep abreast of a rapidly-developing technological field, it is important that a country like Canada ensure that its limited resources are utilized in an effective and opportune manner, that duplication of effort is avoided, that a technology base is developed continually to meet future needs, and that all activities in space are blended into a coherent program able to assist in meeting many national goals. This is particularly true in respect of government programs which must meet a wide variety of requirements with effectiveness and parsimony.

In order to meet its requirements for space systems, Canada could follow a number of approaches, ranging from complete foreign dependency to complete self-sufficiency. The former was rejected at the outset of the Canadian space program beginning with the construction in Canada of the first *Alouette* satellite and its successors, followed in 1963 by the Government's declared objective of developing technology in Canadian industry; then, in 1970, the decision to build the Communications Technology Satellite (CTS) with the objective of further developing the industry as well as meeting future Canadian requirements; then, in 1975, the decision to establish a prime-contractorship in Canada for Canadian spacecraft. At the same time, it was recognized that Canada could not afford the development of a launching capability — which could cost several hundred million dollars per annum for many years to come — and would have to rely on

launching services of other countries. To date, Canada has utilized the services of the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) under conditions which can be considered reasonable. In order to increase [its] ability to obtain foreign launchers for [its] future satellite systems, Canada has sought participation in the national programs of supplier nations. Thus, the National Research Council (NRC) decided upon the design and construction of the Remote Manipulator System as Canada's contribution to the Space Shuttle program of the U.S. At the same time, Canada has developed co-operative links with the European Space Agency, whose *Ariane* launcher could, in the early Eighties, prove to be a viable alternative.

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New Project Proposals

Several government departments have developed proposals in certain key areas of space activity which are intended to maintain and enhance the nation's access to the benefits of space technology. While, in the past several years, significant strides have been made in the area of satellite communications, in which the pace should be maintained, there are other areas, particularly in remote sensing, where to date Canada has had to rely on its southern neighbour for data about Canada gathered by U.S. satellites. In order not to be totally dependent on the goodwill of the U.S. for such data, it is being proposed that Canada put herself in the position of becoming an essential contributor to a proposed European remote sensing program, and also eventually contribute to the planning and implementation of similar U.S. and inter-

Two-hundred-and-fifteen years ago today...
St. Patrick's Day was celebrated for the first time in Canada, at Quebec City.