

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON THE SPACE
STATION PROJECT

In his State of the Union messenger of January, 1984, President Reagan 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, Japan and certain European member states of the European Space Agency responded to the invitation and concluded separate memoranda of understanding with the United States through their space agencies, covering the preliminary phase of the project.

In the fall of 1986, the representatives of the governments themselves, the four "Partners" in this cooperative effort, began negotiations aimed at reaching a multilateral agreement on the principles governing the development, construction, placing in orbit and operation of the space station. Three separate memoranda of understanding setting the terms and conditions governing the application of this multilateral agreement will be signed by NASA for the Americans, and by the space agencies of the three other Partners.

The Canadian contribution will include a way station integrated with the space station infrastructure, in which the Canadarm, officially known as the specialized remote manipulator, 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.

Until October, 1987, the agreement between the governments was negotiated on the bilateral level, as the United States dealt with each of the three partners in turn. At that time, the United States prepared a multilateral text, and two formal negotiating sessions involving the representatives of the four Partners were held in the months following. The text of the agreement was given a definitive form in late spring, 1988, when Canada and the European states involved publicly announced that they had decided to continue the project on the basis of the principles set forth in the agreement. The agreement may be signed during the autumn of 1988.

In addition to the material contribution referred to above, each partner will be closely involved in the design and operation of the space station, at every stage