

REACH FOR THE MARS!

Bush go-ahead for next stop in space

AMERICA is counting down to boldly go where no man has gone before—a £250BILLION effort to put man on Mars!

Flushed with nostalgia and pride during the 20th anniversary of the moon landings, President George Bush has announced that the next stop is the solar system's Red Planet.

Already the first £50billion for the project has been sanctioned by Congress and the first human foot could be stepping on to the planet's dusty surface just after the turn of the century

Pioneers

To get to Mars will require the construction of a massive moon base. This will be used as a staging post for the new pioneers to use before the leap across the universe.

At its closest the

From ALLAN HALL in New York

planet is 35 million miles from earth. At its furthest, it's a staggering 250 million miles straight on from the moon!

Navigating such huge distances, conditioning astronauts for journeys of more than two years **EACH WAY** and constructing the technology are the most difficult tasks America's National Aeronautics And Space Administration has ever faced.

NASA has had its eyes set on the Red Planet ever since the Viking Lander unmanned probes in the late Seventies brought back to Earth

samples of the planet's crust.

It proved that some **FOUR BILLION** years ago the planet was like ours—rivers, forests, ice caps, seas and life.

Something went drastically wrong—an ecological disaster which turned it into a barren desert which bears the scars of riverbeds and lakes.

Critics

Boffins hope that prolonged study of what happened to Mars may give clues about the earth's future, including solutions to problems

like saving our ozone layer.

Left-wing critics are already condemning the president's plan to get to Mars as pie in the sky which can't be afforded.

But scientists and visionaries are left breathless by the scope of the bold move.

With Mars 1,000 times further from the earth than the moon, NASA hopes initially to launch a rocket from a base on the moon for a spectacular one-shot landing like the first moon walk in 1969.

A rocket launched from the moon would

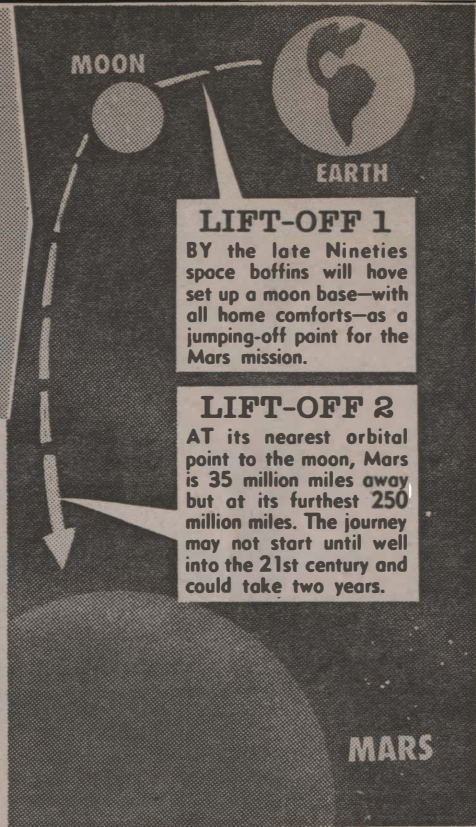
need less fuel than one from earth because of conditions of weightlessness. The rocket, fuel and back-up assemblies would all be transported to the planet in readiness for a launch in space.

Systems being considered by NASA include advanced nuclear reactors in spaceships and fuel cells generated by starlight.

Michael Tennesen, an expert on space travel, says: "The hope is that the stagnant planet Mars may hold the key to life on earth. It is an awesome project."



BUSH... bold move



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