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Standby. Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States.

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THE PRESIDENT: Hello, everybody.

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DR. ELACHI: Good morning, Mr. President.

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THE PRESIDENT: Who am I speaking with?

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DR. ELACHI: This is Charles Elachi, the director of JPL.

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And we have a room full of the mission operation personnel. This is 'Curiosity' Mission Operation on Mars.

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THE PRESIDENT: Well, it is great to talk to all of you.

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And I just want you to know that we could not be more excited about what you've been doing.

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Somebody asked me the other day whether you've already found Martians. (Laughter.)

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I told them we have to give you a little bit of time. But we know you're all hard at work and you're getting

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some well-deserved rest after a successful landing. And I just wanted to call and say congratulations

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to the entire Mars Science Laboratory team, and really all of JPL, on last Monday's incredible success.

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Through your dedicated efforts, 'Curiosity' stuck her landing and captured the attention and imagination of

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millions of people not just across our country, but people all around the world, including Times Square.

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And what you did on Mars was incredibly impressive. Those 76 pyrotechnics going off in perfect

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succession and the 500,000 lines of code working exactly the way you guys had ordered them --

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so it's really mind-boggling what you've been able to accomplish.

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And being able to get that whole landing sequence to work the way you did is a testimony to your team.

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I especially want to congratulate Charles Elachi, the head of JPL; the entry descent and landing lead,

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Adam Steltzner, who helped devise the final step of this amazing descent -- the Sky Crane System.

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What you've accomplished embodies the American spirit, and your passion and your commitment is

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making a difference. And your hard work is now paying dividends, because our expectation is that 'Curiosity'

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is going to be telling us things that we did not know before and laying the groundwork for an even more

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audacious undertaking in the future, and that's a human mission to the Red Planet.

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I understand there's a special Mohawk Guy that's working on the mission. (Laughter.)

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He's been one of the many stars of the show last Sunday night.

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And I, in the past, thought about getting a Mohawk myself -- (laughter) --

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but my team keeps on discouraging me. And now that he's received marriage proposals

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and thousands of new Twitter followers, I think that I'm going to go back to my team and see if it makes sense.

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DR. ELACHI: That's going to be the new fashion at JPL. (Laughter.)

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THE PRESIDENT: It does sound like NASA has come a long way from the white shirt, black dark-rimmed

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glasses and the pocket protectors.(Laughter.) You guys are a little cooler than you used to be. (Laughter.)

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As all of you know, my administration has put a big focus on improving science and technology,

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engineering and math education. And this is the kind of thing that inspires kids across the country.

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They're telling their moms and dads they want to be part of a Mars mission --

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maybe even the first person to walk on Mars. And that kind of inspiration is the by-product

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of work of the sort that you guys have done. So not only do I want to congratulate the team,

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I want to call out a few of the leaders of the group, including Adam,

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but also Peter Theisinger, Richard Cook, John Grotzinger, John Grunsfeld.

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And I'd like to congratulate and thank all of our international partners -- Spain, Russia, Germany, France,

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Canada, Italy, Japan, Australia -- all of them contributed, I know, to the instrumentation 'Curiosity' landed

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on Martian surface -- and all the scientists who are part of the JPL team.

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So you guys have done an outstanding job. You made us all proud. You've made NASA proud.

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You guys are examples of American know-how and ingenuity, and it's really an amazing accomplishment.

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So we can't wait to start hearing back from 'Curiosity' and finding out what's going on.

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We're fortunate to be part of a society that can reach beyond our planet and explore frontiers that were only

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imagined by our ancestors. So it's inspiring to all of us. I'm going to give you guys

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a personal commitment to protect these critical investments in science and technology

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I thank you for devoting your lives to this cause. And if, in fact, you do make contact with Martians,

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please let me know right away. (Laughter.) I've got a lot of other things on my plate,

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but I suspect that that will go to the top of the list. (Laughter.) Even if they're just microbes,

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it will be pretty exciting. (Laughter.)

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DR. ELACHI: Well, thank you, Mr. President. And on behalf of all us at NASA,

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we thank you for taking the time to give us a call. And, hopefully, we inspired some of the millions of

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young people who were watching this landing. Thank you again.

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THE PRESIDENT: Well, you've already inspired us, but I know that the photographs that are going to start

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coming back are going to be remarkable and amazing. And, again, you guys should be remarkably proud.

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Really what makes us best as a species is this curiosity that we have and this yearning to discover and know

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more, and push the boundaries of knowledge. And you are perfect examples of that, and we couldn't be

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more grateful to you. So, congratulations. Keep up the great work.