

# The Augustine Committee: Is NASA's Future Human Spaceflight in Jeopardy?

Posted At : July 24, 2009 11:33 AM | Posted By : Stephanie Sullivan

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The Augustine Committee, led by Norman Augustine, held its first public meeting on June 17, 2009 to discuss and review the U.S. Human Space Flight program. The committee's plan is to generate a report by late August 2009 that will look at the current status of Constellation as well as various alternatives, and the committee will also look into the status of COTS and ISS commercial resupply. GovWin is currently tracking the Constellation Umbrella Program under Opportunity ID [46605](#). Some of the programs under this umbrella are currently on hold pending the outcome of the reports, including, Ares V Cargo launch vehicle ([49094](#)) and the Hardware Development for the Ares Cargo Vehicle ([51452](#)).

Currently, NASA is in the process of designing two boosters, the [Ares I](#) and [Ares V](#). Ares I will have the sole function of launching mission crews into orbit. Ares V will be designed to launch other hardware for use on missions and will have a heavier lift capacity than the Ares I booster. The [Ares V Cargo launch vehicle](#) has not been awarded to date and will be designed to serve as NASA's primary vessel for safe and reliable delivery of large scale hardware to space. This effort includes multiple hardware and propulsion element teams, and the first flight of the Ares V is planned for 2018.

The Aim of the Augustine Commission:

- Conduct an independent review of ongoing U.S. human space flight plans and programs, as well as alternatives, to ensure the Nation is pursuing the best trajectory for the future of human space flight - one that is safe, innovative, affordable, and sustainable
- Aim to identify and characterize a range of options that spans the reasonable possibilities for continuation of U.S. human space flight activities beyond retirement of the space shuttle
- The identification and characterization of these options should address the following objectives:
  - Expediting a new U.S. capability to support utilization of the International Space Station (ISS)
  - Supporting missions to the moon and other destinations beyond low-Earth Orbit (LEO)
  - Stimulating commercial space flight capability
  - Fitting within the current budget profile for NASA exploration activities

NASA has a [website](#) dedicated to tracking the Review of U.S. Human Space Flight Plans Committee.

President Obama's administration tentatively cut another \$3.5 billion out of NASA's exploration budget for the next four years pending the outcome of the Augustine report. The report will also help decide the budget fate for NASA programs that include the Orion crew capsule, the Earth Departure Stage, and the Altair lunar landing.

Often times NASA projects grow in scope, complexity, and cost as work gets underway, and a potential, but not necessarily feasible [solution](#) would be for the U.S. aerospace industry to become more efficient by finding a way to conduct research and development for the human spaceflight program with the \$22 billion NASA's been given to spend on exploration between now and 2013. A former suggestion from the Augustine panel in 1990 was to "turn to new and revolutionary technologies to build more capable and significantly less costly means to launch manned and unmanned spacecraft." The Augustine panel may need to now help come up with a way to do that in order for NASA to accomplish a lot of the projects that are coming up the pipeline with the current budget constraints.