

Space Politics

Archive for Campaign '08

More criticism, more studies

July 25, 2008 at 6:43 am □ Filed under Campaign '08, NASA

Yet another critic of NASA's exploration architecture has emerged: Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin. The *Orlando Sentinel* reports today that Aldrin wants to convene a "panel of experts" to study whether Constellation is the right approach to implementing the Vision for Space Exploration. "We need to stick with the mission but rethink some of the ways we implement it," he told the paper. "It doesn't pay to stick with a bad idea."

Aldrin has won over some prominent individuals and organizations, including former senator Jake Garn and the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Aldrin may also have the ear of the campaign of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama: a campaign spokesman told the *Sentinel* that there have been discussions between the campaign and the former astronaut, and that "we are expecting a more detailed proposal from him soon".

This is not the only effort that is reexamining either the Vision or its implementation. The article also notes that National Academy of Sciences is putting together its own panel to study "the goals and rationale" of the space program. In addition, The Planetary Society is apparently drafting its own recommendations, including the possibility of bypassing a human return to the Moon in favor of exploration of near Earth asteroids.

It would seem that, while the major presidential candidates may be vague about the directions they would pursue in space policy, the winner will have no shortage of suggestions.