

NASA, Europe work on space partnership

WASHINGTON (AP) — European countries might invest as much as \$1 billion in America's \$8 billion space station if an acceptable partnership can be worked out with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, an official of the European Space Agency said Thursday.

Ian Pryke of Great Britain, head of ESA's Washington office, said the 10 member nations of the agency have discussed possible cooperation in advance of NASA administrator James M. Beggs visit to Europe next week.

Beggs will "explore opportunities for cooperation" during stops in Britain, West Germany, Italy and France, and on March 9 will address a meeting of all ESA members in Paris.

Following the visit, the ESA executive, Erik Quistgaard of Belgium, will enter into a new round of discussions with the member states in an effort to establish a concerted European viewpoint," Pryke said.

He said discussions would center on what use Europe could make of the station and the areas of technology where ESA could make a significant contribution.

Pryke testified before the Senate Science, Technology and Space subcommittee which is considering Presi-

dent Reagan's proposal that the United States develop a permanent manned space station within a decade. NASA is asking \$150 million in startup money in the fiscal 1985 budget and estimates total-cost at \$8 billion.

Subcommittee chairman Slade Gorton, R-Wash., asked Pryke how much ESA might contribute to the cost.

"To be treated as a viable partner, ESA feels it has to contribute at least 10 percent," he replied. "Based on NASA's \$8 billion figure, that would be about \$1 billion."

In negotiating European participation in an American space station, Pryke said ESA would be guided by these considerations:

- ESA's share of the work would have to provide a stimulus to European technology.
- ESA would want its role to be visible in that it would be responsible for one or more key elements over which it would have full responsibility.
- Whatever hardware the Europeans build, they would want a clearly defined role in operation of the station.
- ESA would want access to the entire space station capability and not only to the elements it develops.

New shuttle's maiden trip may be delayed

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The debut of America's newest space shuttle, Discovery, may be delayed a couple of weeks in June so that its sister ship, Challenger, can be launched on time April 6.

Discovery has given up one of two maneuvering-system pods to Challenger to replace a pod damaged during the last shuttle mission.

Space agency officials say Dis-

covery may not get the pod back in time to make its maiden journey on June 4, and the new work schedule calls for the seven-day mission to begin June 19.

"There are a lot of ifs on that," said National Aeronautics and Space Administration spokesman Mark Hess. "Our current thinking is to take the pod off Challenger when it returns and put it back on Discovery. But that's only an

assessment, and it could likely change in the next four months."

The pod, one of two on the shuttle's tail section, contains an engine and several thrusters for maneuvering the spacecraft. The two pods are identical and compose the Orbital Maneuvering System.

Challenger's left pod apparently was damaged during its atmospheric re-entry before landing Feb. 11 from an eight-

day mission.

Shuttle managers decided to use Discovery's rather than wait to have the damaged pod repaired.

"We don't have pods just sitting around since it's not a spare-parts item," said Hess. "So the thinking is to put the pod back on Discovery later. That's what is driving the June 19 date."

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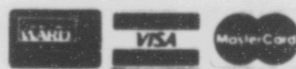


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Schools told to 'resist lure' of tax credits

NEW YORK (AP) — An annual gathering of private school leaders was warned Thursday that education and curriculum reform proposals sweeping many states could threaten their "right to be different" from public schools.

"There is no reason for the independent schools to join the crowd," said Diane Ravitch, a professor at Columbia Teachers College and the keynote speaker at the 22nd annual conference of the National Association of Independent Schools.

Private schools have often contributed valuable ideas to American education with bold experiments, and Ms. Ravitch said independent schools should "steadfastly defend the right to be different," even if that meant defying increasingly vocal calls in many states for rigid curriculum requirements.

Ms. Ravitch, author of "The Troubled Crusade," a highly-acclaimed book on the history of American public schools published last year, also urged private schools to "resist the lure of tuition tax credits or vouchers, which may ultimately provide the grounds for direct governmental regulation of independent schools."

Tuition tax credits for parents of private school children, an idea backed by President Reagan as well as many of the 6,000 private educators Ms. Ravitch was addressing, "will cost you your independence," she warned.

The problem of preserving private school independence at a time when state legislatures across the country are pressing curriculum reform was a dominant theme of the conference.

John C. Esty, Jr., president of NAIS, said in an interview that independent schools should be wary of such "top-down" education reforms because they "don't get to the critical issue" — how to tailor education to the needs of individual students.

Esty also said that NAIS had in the past year modified its support for tuition tax credits.

"We oppose credits if they're at the expense of public education," Esty said, adding that NAIS felt the time was not right to lobby hard for tax credits for private school parents while the federal government was struggling with a huge budget deficit.

Still, Esty contended, private schools save the public \$13 billion a year, and he said he still favored a system of tax credits aimed exclusively for poorer private school parents.

He estimated such credits would probably cost the federal government \$1 billion and would mainly benefit financially beleaguered inner city parochial schools, Esty said.

Tax reform bills being considered in Washington were another major concern at the conference. John W. Sanders, NAIS director of government relations, warned a convention workshop that two key federal tax benefits for private schools might be particularly vulnerable as Congress grapples with ways to make the tax code fairer: tax deductions for charitable contributions, and the exemption of private schools from federal corporate income taxes.

He said various "flat tax" proposals were particularly dangerous to private schools, since such a tax would drastically simplify the tax code by eliminating most or all tax deductions, including those benefitting private schools.

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