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Apollo 13 Crisis Committee

Secondary Schools United Nations Symposium

**Position Paper**

We are currently two days into the third space mission intended to land on the moon, a mission that is now routine to many members of Apollo 13's crew and flight team. We have just gotten news that the second oxygen tank reads 0 for the level of oxygen. As a flight director for this crew, it is imperative that I, Gerry Griffin, along with my fellow flight directors, assist the astronauts in conducting a safe space mission. It is my job to oversee all of the individual flight controllers in their operations, as well as make the decisions that I believe will allow the astronauts to have a safe flight.

My number one priority during this mission is to allow the astronauts a safe return to earth. However, it is impossible for me to know what events may occur in the future, even if all the routine checkups on the flight vessel were performed, and there were no apparent problems. A safe return of these astronauts will allow for future missions to happen, which is an important part of the further development of technology and exploration. Given the fact the we have received notice that the second oxygen tank is allegedly, we should proceed by verifying this. If it is simply a fluke and the tank is still full, the mission can proceed as planned, as long as the astronauts take precautions to check that the tank is still at the level it should be. If the tank is indeed empty, then there is a much more serious problem at hand. The oxygen in the tank is needed to support the astronauts on their trip, as the service module only contains enough oxygen and hydrogen for a ten-day flight.

In the event that the reading on the oxygen tank is true, it will be incredibly important that we, as flight directors, act immediately. What may happen next is completely unknown to us, as the situation in space are incredibly different than it is here on earth. As keeping the astronauts alive and safe takes precedence over completing the scientific components of the mission, attempting to fix the oxygen tank, if possible, should be the next course of action.

Co-operation amongst my team members will be of utmost important during this mission, as in space there is very marginal room for error, or time to make fully coherent decisions. This is because of the extreme conditions, such as the temperatures that can reach drastically different ends of the scale, unsafe for humans, as well as the lack of gravity. This will not be the time for arguments amongst us, seen as we do not know what will happen next; time is of the uttermost essence. It is our job to safely return these astronauts to earth, so we need to make sure we are correctly relaying information to each other. Most of all, it is imperative that we remain calm during this time of duress. Panic will lead to irrational and hasty decisions, which may compromise the situation that the astronauts are potentially in.

As a flight director for this mission, my aim is to run as smooth a mission as possible, in order for it to be a success. The entire nation is looking on as this mission is run, and it is our job as a flight team to make sure that we do not disappoint. This includes our nation, the astronauts and their families, and whatever the future may hold.

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