

Although I spent April at my desk in London, I left again on 10 May for Prague to report the XII COSPAR International Space Science Conference. It was the only chance I ever had to interview Russian space scientists and engineers about their work, and I found their statements most interesting, although after Apollo 9 they frankly admitted that they had lost the 'Race to the Moon'. I sent articles to London every day, but apart from a few column centimeters nothing was published. I decided therefore to write a feature article "A new Age in Space Research" which summarised the then existing situation. It was 99 C-C long. (COSPAR = Committee on Space Research of ICSU = International Council of Scientific Unions, the World Federation of all Scientific Academies.)

One of the Russians with whom I talked said that the first American astronaut on the Moon would give the Russians a tremendous shock, and this might lead to greater Russian Government support for their own space endeavours. This in turn might even help NASA in their constant fight for greater financial help from Congress. The Russians were proud of their successful robot exploration of Mars and Venus.

At the Prague conference, an American space scientist compared the expenditure on the Vietnam War of £ 12500 million per year at 1969 value, with the Apollo cost of £ 1700 million, and estimated a manned flight to Mars at £ 40000 million, less than four times the Apollo budget. A great advantage of the Mars expedition, compared to the Vietnam War, was that all moneys would remain in America. Frank Borman, the captain of Apollo 8, when asked about his pay during the flight replied: "I received \$ 450, the normal pay of a Colonel on active flying duty in the US Air Force." [The Apollo 8 flight lasted 147 hours]

As at this time a landing on the Moon appeared certain in the not too distant future, I wondered what would be the first words spoken by a man on landing. The *Sunday Telegraph* offered on 18 May a prize of £ 10, not a very great sum, for a quotation in English of less than 50 words, having accepted my suggestion to invite a public answer to the question. On 18 June it published the result. It was an extract from a speech by Winston Churchill: "This is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning". I found it a good quote, but much too long to remember for an excited astronaut on his historic achievement.

When Neil Armstrong stepped on lunar soil at the Sea of Tranquility on 20 July 1969, he exclaimed: "That's one small step for man, but a giant leap for mankind". There was great controversy for months afterwards, whether he said "a man" or "men".