

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE TO ALL MEDIA

Denver, March 15th, 2021. The Explorers Foundation, a small private US foundation, is pleased to announce it has funded Phase One of the Study Project on Canada-Australia-United Kingdom-New Zealand Collaboration in the Development of Interplanetary Space, or “CANZUK Space Study” for short. The Principal Investigator of this study will be James C. Bennett, who combines a long history of entrepreneurial activity, policy advocacy, and consulting in the commercial arena in the USA and UK with an equally long history of researching and writing about space policy, and broader topics of technology, politics, and society.

Some specific examples of these activities include having been a co-founder and former President of American Rocket Company (AMROC), which developed the hybrid rocket engine technology used today in Richard Branson’s Virgin Galactic spaceship, as well as others. Mr. Bennett has also been active more recently in the UK’s reviving space arena, having served as a participant in the UK Space Agency/Department for Transport’s Spaceplane Regulatory Workshop process in the past decade, and consulting to British Isles start-ups in the space arena. He is Space Fellow of the Economic Policy Centre in London. Some recent publications on space policy topics have included studies for the Reason Foundation, for Resources for the Future, Inc. under contract to NASA, for the Economic Policy Centre, London, and for the Space Policy Institute of George Washington University. Mr. Bennett believes, and Explorers Foundation concurs, that the UK and the other CANZUK nations have the potential to be significant players in this field in decades to come, and even more so working together than working separately. As such, they would collectively offer a collaborative partner for the USA with capabilities on the order of those of Japan or Europe.

In recent years a “CANZUK” movement has arisen in those four countries, dedicated in the short term to the threefold goal of CANZUK free trade, free movement, and increased cooperation. The first two of those goals are easily defined and readily understood. Cooperation, the third, sounds desirable, but many people are unclear about precisely which areas might benefit, and what such cooperation might look like. The CANZUK Space Study will give an example that is timely, currently in the public eye, and one in which all four CANZUK nations have recently been raising their profiles.

One of the main themes of the CANZUK Space Study is that the new commercial space revolution has made it more possible to do more in space for much less than ever before, provided the programs make better use of private capabilities instead of relying primarily on public agencies and public funding. The CANZUK grouping is well-placed for such a model, with Britain having particular expertise in small, low-cost satellites, Canada in radar imaging of the Earth, Australia with one of the best test ranges in the world, and New Zealand hosting a very effective private launch industry. So, rather than recreating the European Space Agency model with big-ticket government programs, it would primarily facilitate an environment for cooperation among non-government ventures, easing barriers such as technology transfer controls and ensuring common, compatible policies on property rights in space, and favorable intellectual property regimes. Such an approach would also be very compatible with the Artemis Accords for activity beyond the Earth that the US has offered, and for which the US is in the process of gaining multilateral partners.

The study will be divided into two phases, the first (whose start is announced by this press release) being to review existing space activity in the CANZUK nations, develop models for CANZUK space cooperation, and assess its potential. The second phase will examine in more detail several models for doing so. A third, follow-on phase would examine the implications of a CANZUK model for other medium-level powers, and to examine US-CANZUK cooperation in space, including the development of Common-Law-based space commercial and property law. This phase would be carried out in partnership with another organization, details of which are in discussion at this time, and will be announced at a later date.

The study will be published by Explorers Foundation. Discussions are in progress with potential co-publishers.

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