

NASA basic research loses funding

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Manned space flight efforts have drained funds from National Aeronautics and Space Administration research some scientists consider more important.

Basic research has been cut by \$3 billion over the next five years, The New York Times reported, even though the agency's budget this year is up by 3.2 percent to \$16.8 billion.

Projects that are being postponed -- or possibly dropped -- include efforts to obtain a soil sample from Mars, the exploration of the under-ice surface of the Jupiter's moon Europa, the search for possibly habitable planets and research into dark matter.

"We're delaying some missions, but we're not abandoning them," Michael Griffin, NASA administrator, told the House Science

Committee last month.

Griffin said the expense of maintaining the space shuttle fleet, continuing construction of the International Space Station and working on the next generation of space travel, the crew exploration vehicle, has left the agency short of money.

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