

Neil Armstrong says Obama 'poorly advised' on space

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Retired NASA astronaut Neil Armstrong, commander of the Apollo 11 mission and the first man to walk on the moon, testifies on Capitol Hill May 12, 2010 in Washington, DC. Armstrong said that President Barack Obama is "poorly advised" on space matters, renewing criticism of a plan to abandon a project to return US astronauts to the moon.

Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, said that President Barack Obama is "poorly advised" on space matters, renewing criticism of a plan to abandon a project to return US astronauts to the moon.

Appearing before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, Armstrong said the Obama plan to end the Constellation program and cut other [space](#) efforts appeared to be made without input from NASA or the president's science adviser.

"I have yet to find a person in NASA, the Defense Department, the Air Force, the National Academies, industry, or academia that had any knowledge of the plan prior to its announcement," the [Apollo 11](#) commander told lawmakers.

"A plan that was invisible to so many was likely contrived by a very small group in secret who persuaded the president that this was a unique opportunity to put his stamp on a new and innovative program."

Armstrong, the first to set foot on the surface of the Moon in his 1969 mission, said the United States "has invested substantially for more than half a century to acquire a position of leadership in space" but that "to maintain a leadership position requires steadfast determination and a continuing investment in the future."

He added, "If the leadership we have acquired through our investment is allowed simply to fade away, other nations will surely step in where we have faltered. I do not believe that this would be in our best interests."

A month ago, Armstrong signed an open letter to Obama criticizing cuts to the [space program](#).

Armstrong and fellow Apollo program commanders James Lovell and Eugene Cernan said in that letter that the plan "destines our nation to become one of second or even third rate stature."

In April, Obama announced plans to send US [astronauts](#) into the orbit of Mars within the next three decades but declined to back down on his plan to scrap the bloated and behind-schedule Constellation program.

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