

Editorial

The right response to a tragedy

When a tragedy such as that of the Space Shuttle Challenger hits, all good people are cruelly but ineluctably wrenched out of their day-to-day preoccupations with the petty, the smallness with which they usually conduct their daily lives, and made to feel something of the deeper side of human emotion. It is very much as if your nation has been attacked. Sadness at the immediate tragedy is coupled with something higher, an impassioned determination and commitment to what is greater than one's individual life.

In the nature of the tragedy, the question posed is the very purpose of a nation's existence, and what good for humanity, present and future generations, a nation and individuals within it might accomplish.

President Reagan best expressed that loftier sense of the tragedy, when, in the middle of his statement on the day of the Shuttle disaster, he addressed the nation's school children: "I know it's hard to understand, but sometimes painful things like this happen. It's all part of the process of exploration and discovery. It's all part of taking a chance and expanding man's horizons. The future doesn't belong to the faint-hearted; it belongs to the brave. The Challenger crew was pulling us into the future, and we'll continue to follow it. . . . We'll continue our quest in space. There will be more shuttle flights, and more shuttle crews, and yes, volunteers, more civilians, more teachers in space. Nothing ends here. . . . We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them this morning as they prepared for their journey and waved good-bye, and slipped the surly bonds of Earth to touch the face of God."

Those who died on the Space Shuttle Challenger were engaged most directly in the future of mankind, expanding the knowledge and the scope of technologies that represent the last best hope of this tortured planet. This includes the Shuttle program's "military" connection, the Strategic Defense Initiative, whose laser and kindred technologies, while rendering nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete," have already produced, and

will continue producing, civilian applications that are indispensable to save and raise millions of lives.

In what indescribable contempt, then, the American people hold the Soviet Union and its echo chambers in the West, who call for an end to the space program, an end to the Strategic Defense Initiative, and hail the tragedy of the Space Shuttle Challenger as "useful" for this purpose. And the dutiful, pro-Soviet major news media of the West, whose "reporters" could be everywhere seen, instructing school children that they were "traumatized" and feared the program; crawling around the streets, attempting to drag the sentiments of our population back down into the mud for the sake of eliciting any small hint of opposition to the programs that alone stand in the way of near-term Soviet domination of this world, that alone can take men beyond the surly bonds of Earth.

The *New York Times* did not even wait a decent interval before editorializing that this just goes to prove that manned space flight is "too dangerous," and it, SDI and all, should be scrapped.

In light of this cackling of the enemies of the nation, we are not surprised that of the many people we have spoken to since the Shuttle disaster, we have encountered very few who did not express their suspicion that Challenger was sabotaged. The nation *has* been attacked; we only await the results of investigation to determine in what sense that is true.

Since what we now have is perhaps the most corrupt, traitor-ridden Congress in history, you may expect that, after a decent interval, your senator and congressman will join a Soviet-orchestrated effort to kill, or "slow down," what must now be accelerated: SDI, Shuttle, and space exploration. Most will. But chances are, you will also, in this election year, have a La-Rouche candidate to vote for—there are hundreds now, and more each day in every part of the country. The tragedy of Tuesday, Jan. 28, produced a set of emotions that are not a bad thing on which to base one's vote.