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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration

Washington, D.C.  
20546

Office of the Administrator

August 16, 1979

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The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Enclosed is the monthly NASA status report on the Space Shuttle Program. Progress continues to be encouraging but our schedules remain extremely tight.

In the past month, a potential problem has arisen affecting all users of certain aluminum alloy plate from one factory; a manufacturing process apparently has resulted in non-uniform material reaching the fabricators, including the Shuttle contractors. The Defense Logistics Agency has taken the leadership in this activity and we are cooperating with them and other agencies and companies involved in assessing the implications of this situation.

Our consultants are on board and working, and other necessary activities are underway to support my mid-October report to you as requested.

Respectfully,

*John F. Yardley for*

Robert A. Frosch  
Administrator

Enclosure

SPACE SHUTTLE STATUS  
(Period from July 13 to August 10)

Overall - Emphasis continues to be on accomplishment and acceleration of effort on Orbiter 102 at the Kennedy Space Center (KSC), and the conducting of certification and qualification testing across the program. Work at KSC on readying Orbiter 102 for flight continues to show improvement, especially in the installation of the Thermal Protection System (TPS) tiles. This effort remains one of the critical concerns in the program, and the schedule for its completion remains tight. Certification testing is also a primary concern as substantial effort in this area is required before the first flight, particularly in the Orbiter project. Main Propulsion System (MPS) testing remains delayed as repairs, made necessary by last month's main fuel valve failure, are made. All three first flight engines have been installed in the Orbiter, leaving the Solid Rocket Motor (SRM) as the only major flight element not yet delivered. The program remains targeted to a March-June 1980 first flight date which continues to be regarded as tight.

Orbiter - Work on Orbiter "Columbia" at KSC is still continuing, with improvements in progress being noted. During the period of this report, approximately 2,600 TPS tiles have been installed compared to about 1,300 during the previous period. This brings the total number of tiles installed at KSC to about 5,200. Other installation and testing is also being accomplished in parallel with the TPS activities as efforts are targeted toward a rollout of the Orbiter from the Orbiter Processing Facility just prior to the end of the year.

Engine - The major effort during this reporting period has been on the acceptance testing of the first three flight engines. These engines have now been delivered to KSC and installed in the Orbiter. Because of the concentration on this activity, and the delay in the MPS testing, few additional test seconds were accumulated during this period, and the total now stands at 50,638. The other major main engine activity has been in Preliminary Flight Certification (PFC) testing where calibration tests are now being run on PFC engine 2004 as the second phase of PFC testing gets underway on that engine. A second PFC engine, 0007, is also being installed in the test stand at National Space Technology Laboratories, and calibration tests are being conducted.

Test Program - The main propulsion test program failure, reported last month, has caused a delay in the next series of tests until this fall. Damage is being repaired and a test failure analysis is in process. This analysis will be completed later this month after which engine modifications will be initiated.

External Tank (ET) and Solid Rocket Booster (SRB) - The first flight tank, delivered to KSC last month, is in the Vehicle Assembly Building undergoing testing and close-out work. ET effort is on schedule. Assembly of SRB structural elements continues at KSC, and casting of the first flight SRM segments has been completed. Delivery to KSC of the first SRM flight segments will now take place in September.

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