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# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NUMBER 98-02**
**JUNE 24, 1998**

## PHASE 3-D LAUNCH DATE UNKNOWN

**MARBURG, GERMANY (AMSAT News Service)** **AMSAT's new Phase 3D satellite will not be launched on the third test flight of Ariane 5. The bad news reached Karl Meinzer, DJ4ZC, Phase 3D Project Leader and AMSAT-DL President on Monday, June 15th. He immediately informed the P3D Project workers of the unfortunate news.**

**AMSAT-NA President Bill Tynan, W3XO, had the following explanation for the decision: "It is important to point out that the decision was actually made by ArianeSpace, not ESA. As everyone should know by now, ESA is the European Space Agency. It is similar to NASA in the United States except that it is multi-national. ArianeSpace is the organization set up to market Ariane launches. So, naturally, its prime interest is money. Because of the failure of the first Ariane 5 test, A-501 in June of 1996, and the less-than-expected performance of the second flight, A-502 last October, all concerned have been understandably anxious to complete a fully successful test as soon as possible. ArianeSpace cannot begin to sell Ariane 5 launches until a successful test actually takes place."**

**Tynan went on to state that, "The failure of '501 and the lower-than-expected performance of '502 have caused an extension of the program and hence have increased the cost of the development phase. ESA has been anxious to recoup some of these additional costs. As a result, they asked ArianeSpace to try very hard to find a paying customer for A-503. A figure of somewhere around $35,000,000 was mentioned. This is about half of the amount usually paid to launch a present-day commercial satellite on an operational launcher. The lesser amount is indicative of the fact that Ariane 5 is not yet fully operational. ESA even signaled a willingness to delay the flight until a suitable customer could be found. This shows how serious they were in wanting to recoup some of the financial losses they have suffered as a result of the delays and problems that have befallen the Ariane 5 program."**

**"ArianeSpace, apparently in order to get the A-503 flight off as soon as possible, and so that they could begin to sell future Ariane 5 launches, agreed to pay ESA some $40,000,000 in order to control the payloads on the mission and get A-503 launched as soon as possible. It is not known at this time what ArianeSpace will choose to put on the '503 flight; it may even be a dummy satellite of some sort. The bottom line is that Phase 3D will not ride on Ariane 503," Tynan said.**

**(more)**

**"While we are disappointed, Tynan continued, "crying and gnashing of teeth never accomplishes anything." He emphasized that "AMSAT is taking steps to complete the testing of Phase 3D and have it ready for any launch that we might be able to obtain," adding, "naturally, ESA and ArianeSpace are still prime candidates for our presentations."**

**Tynan emphasized that Phase 3D was designed and built "with the then very real prospect of a launch on an Ariane 5 vehicle." It was later determined that with an appropriate adapter, it could also be accommodated by an Ariane 4 launch vehicle. "But, because it was built to go on an Ariane, it just can't be put on any rocket that's going up," said Tynan. Continuing, he noted that Phase 3D is a "rather large spacecraft and also quite massive, in the order of 600 kilograms or about 1200 pounds when fully fueled. As such, it requires a launcher with a large volume under the shroud and a launch vehicle with substantial performance."**

**"The orbit that the launcher puts us into is also very important", Tynan continued. "Generally a Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO) is what we need. A launch into a circular low Earth orbit (LEO) would be much less than optimum. Many launches, including the Space Shuttle, go to such LEO orbits. There are, of course, other launchers that go to GTO besides Ariane, and we will be looking at them. However, nothing can be promised at this time," he concluded.**

**Tynan also said that he hopes that AMSAT-NA members, and all who have contributed to the Phase 3D project to such a great extent, will keep the faith and continue their support while efforts to secure a launch for Phase 3D continue. He also made it clear that AMSAT is beginning to embark on other projects as Phase 3D is being completed. These include assisting with a number of university satellite projects, some of which are to include amateur transponders. Effort is also getting under way in connection with developing amateur radio equipment for the International Space Station. "In addition, I'd like everyone to remember that there are several satellites preparing for launch which will carry amateur transponders," said Tynan.**

**The AMSAT-NA president wrapped up his statement with, "There's lot's to keep all satellite enthusiasts occupied while waiting for the launch of Phase 3D, which will come in time. Just because Phase 3D will apparently not be launched this year, AMSAT is very much alive and kicking."**

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