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NEWS RELEASE

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PHASE 3-D WILL LAUNCH ON ARIANE 502

GUILDFORD, ENGLAND (AMSAT News Service) It's now official...AMSAT's Phase 3-D International Satellite *will* be a passenger on the next launch of the European Space Agency's (ESA) Ariane 5 mission, AR 502. The launch of Phase 3-D on AR 502 has now been formally slated by ESA to occur "within the first six months of 1997". However, AMSAT officials are now working to complete all integration and testing efforts for the Phase 3-D satellite in time for a launch that could come as early as mid-February, 1997.

The latest announcement came on July 27 during a joint AMSAT-Germany/AMSAT-North America presentation on Phase 3-D's status to the 1996 AMSAT-UK Colloquium at the University of Surrey here. The decision to re-confirm launch of Phase-3-D via AR 502 was made immediately following a series of high level meetings between AMSAT and ESA officials at ESA's Headquarters in Paris, France on July 23rd and 24th. These meetings occurred in conjunction with ESA's public announcement of results from their formal Inquiry Board investigating the failure of the first Ariane 5 launch, AR 501, in early June.

Dr. Karl Meinzer, DJ4ZC, AMSAT-DL President and Phase 3-D Project Leader, along with Keith Baker, KB1SF, AMSAT-NA Executive Vice President, and Dick Jansson, WD4FAB, AMSAT-NA Vice President, Engineering, represented AMSAT at both the AR 501 Inquiry Board's news conference as well as in the subsequent meetings with ESA officials.

"We have been given strong assurances that ESA has taken the recommendations of the AR 501 Inquiry Board to heart and are now 'rolling up their shirtsleeves' to correct those deficiencies in time for the Ariane 502 launch next year," said Dr. Meinzer. He went on to say that, "I am very confident that ESA will do all that can possibly be done to insure our launch is successful."

AMSAT-NA's Keith Baker was equally positive about the latest developments for Phase 3-D's launch. Keith noted that, "The fact that the investigators were able to use recovered debris and subsequent laboratory analysis to duplicate the exact sequence of events that caused the AR 501 failure gives us renewed confidence for the prospects of a successful launch on AR 502." In addition, Baker went on to say that, "It is also readily apparent that the Inquiry Board's findings and recommendations went well beyond immediate hardware and software issues to address the primary root causes of the AR 501 failure."

(more)

AMSAT-NA President Bill Tynan, W3XO, also viewed the latest launch developments for the Phase 3-D satellite as good news. "However", said Tynan, "this still places responsibility for completion and testing of Phase 3-D firmly in our court." He went on to note that, "We must still finish final integration and testing of the satellite by year end, conduct the launch campaign, and insure the necessary funds are secured to do so." Tynan concluded that, "Even if our launch goes as it is now scheduled, we will have incurred an unplanned program stretch-out of a year or more. This translates directly into a critical need for additional funding to insure Phase 3-D is complete and flight-ready when ESA tells us it is time to launch," he said.

AMSAT is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) educational and scientific organization that was first chartered in Washington, DC, USA. Its objectives include promoting space research and communication by building, launching and controlling Amateur Radio spacecraft. Since its founding, over 25 years ago, many other like-minded organizations have been formed around the world to pursue the same goals and who now also share the AMSAT name. Often acting together, these groups have used predominantly volunteer labor and donated resources to design, construct and, with the added assistance of government and commercial space agencies, successfully launch, over two dozen Amateur Radio communications satellites into Earth orbit.

The Phase 3-D satellite, now under construction with the help of over a dozen AMSAT groups on five continents, will be the largest, most complex, and most expensive Amateur Radio satellite ever built.

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