# Sea Launch Review Board Meets to Discuss Anomaly

Members of the Sea Launch Failure Review Oversight Board met last week to hear briefings from the independent teams that are investigating the launch failure of March 12.

Jim Maser, Chair of the Board and Chief Engineer for Sea Launch, said progress toward a mid-May review completion is under way. "We continue to find agreement in our findings of the root cause and effects of the anomaly," he said. "We have some very significant briefings scheduled over the next couple of weeks. As a result, we should have a clear picture of the corrective actions necessary to return to flight."

The U.S.-only session was limited to the independent investigations conducted by Boeing personnel. While the session focused on Mission 3 (launch of the ICO F-1 satellite), there was also a comparative review of the previous two missions. The Boeing participants have been carefully reviewing large amounts of telemetry data as well as system data presented by representatives of Sea Launch partners, Yuzhnoye and Energia. The Board is also exploring the validation of other critical systems, such as the general processes and procedures used by the Boeing team in its participation in Sea Launch operations.

The Russian and Ukrainian partners formed a joint commission and completed their review of the launch data on April 11. By April 19, all of the members of this commission, including the directors of the Russian Space Agency, the Ukrainian National Space Agency, and the presidents of Energia, Yuzhnoye and Yuzhmash had signed the final report. An executive summary of this document is being delivered to Sea Launch this week. Next week, the full report will be presented to the Failure Review Oversight Board in Moscow.

Liftoff of the third flight of Sea Launch, carrying the ICO F-1 communications satellite, occurred precisely on schedule at 6:49 a.m. (PST), March 12, from the equatorial launch site at 154 degrees West Longitude. An anomaly occurred during the second stage operation, prior to reaching orbital velocity. The ICO spacecraft did not reach orbit. Data review indicates the root cause of the failure is related to a ground support equipment software error.

The Sea Launch partners - Boeing, RSC Energia, KB Yuzhnoye/PO Yuzhmash and the Anglo-Norwegian Kvaerner Group - are committed to working together to resolve this anomaly in a timely fashion. Sea Launch is working toward a return to flight in the Summer of 2000.

For additional information, please visit the Sea Launch website.

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