Ready to Fly

Boeing satellite technicians assemble the solar wings to NASA's second Tracking and Data Relay Satellite (TDRS-I) at the Integration and Test Complex in El Segundo, Calif. TDRS-I, the second of three in the series, is scheduled to launch March 8 on an Atlas IIA rocket from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla. The new TDRS spacecraft is equipped with innovative folding antennas that meet NASA's requirements for reflectors with a large surface area, yet low weight. The pair of 15-foot-diameter, flexible graphite mesh antenna reflectors fold up for launch, then spring back into their original cupped circular shape on orbit. When fully deployed, the TDRS-I satellite measures 68 feet, 10 inches in length and 43 feet, five inches in width.