

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND
ENT AIR FORCE BASE, COLORADO 80912



15 SEP 1976

General William V. McBride
Vice Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

Dear Bill

In my recent message to you concerning the launch of DSP Flight 7, I mentioned a possible problem concerning Flights' 3 and 4 ability to detect the SSN 6 MOD II SLBM because of recent changes in IR signature data. It now appears that we may have an additional problem concerning Flight 4, of which you should be aware.

For the past eighteen months, Flight 4 has been consuming fuel at an above average rate because of a thruster anomaly. This problem has been compounded by a recent thruster heater problem which requires even higher fuel usage to compensate for the heater failure.

As of 30 July 1976, only 60 pounds of usable fuel remained. At that time, a six month average usage rate (February through July 1976) indicated propellant should be expended at approximately 20 pounds per year, resulting in a 3-year fuel life remaining. However, fuel usage has increased significantly due to the heater thruster problem. For instance, it has been necessary to execute our heater contingency plan - which is what uses the extra fuel - a total of six times in the past ten days. If it is necessary to continue to execute the contingency plan at this rate, the satellite will run out of fuel in approximately April of 1977.

As was the case with the IR intensity problem, it is still too early to take any corrective action at this time. However, in view of the other difficulties, we have had with respect to DSP, I want to make sure that you are aware of this new problem.

Sincerely

Chapman
DANIEL JAMES, JR., General, USAF
Commander in Chief

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