



NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

August 16, 1963

IN REPLY REFER TO:

M-C D(P) 1400.28

Mr. Harrison A. Storms  
President  
Space and Information Systems Division  
North American Aviation, Inc.  
12214 Lakewood Boulevard  
Downey, California

Dear Stormy:

Since there was little chance for any extended discussions with you today, we thought it might be worthwhile to put down some observations resulting from our visit to Downey.

Our overall feeling, following the visit, is one of continued concern. This concern stems largely from the fact that we expected to see more along the lines of positive actions taken by NAA in order to prevent a recurrence of the present scheduling situation.

The fact that all of us in NASA as well as at NAA consider the schedule slippage to be very serious probably needs no further discussion. Even though we may disagree on the validity of some of the indicators used to assess the situation, I believe that both NASA and NAA agree that the schedule has slipped ten months since last October, and that it may slip even further unless positive steps are taken now to improve performance.

In this regard, three points were made: an improved change control procedure is being instituted; a Vehicle Management Organization is being established; and the relationship between manufacturing and test in the area of spacecraft checkout is being examined.

The change control procedure certainly is a step in the right direction, in that it provides an impedance to, and a thorough understanding of, all implications before a change is authorized. However, there did not appear to be a clear definition of the standard or base against which changes are to be measured.

Because we do not completely understand the responsibilities and authorities of the Vehicle Management Organization, it is difficult to comment on it. When this new element was first described, it sounded very much like the Project Engineering organization that was established by NAA about six months ago; apparently this organization failed to achieve the desired effects.

Even after considerable discussion, we were unable to get a clear picture of who is responsible for what in the new organization, and must, therefore, conclude that NAA has not yet thought out all implications.

In the area of test and checkout, we still do not have an understanding of the relationship between Paup's and Crossfield's organizations. We are, of course, concerned that further schedule delays may result from overlapping or competitive responsibilities. Unfortunately, today's visit did not clarify this situation.

Perhaps these impressions are premature, and can be attributed to the fact that our visit took place before you had a chance to implement all your plans. Since you were unable to participate in the meeting, we have no direct feeling for your personal views on these issues.

As we mentioned, the implications of schedule performance on the program are extremely far reaching. We would be most interested in more detailed follow-up discussions when you feel that you are sufficiently far along to make this worthwhile.

Sincerely yours,

George M. Low  
Deputy Director of Manned Space Flight  
(Programs)

Joseph F. Shea  
Deputy Director of Manned Space Flight  
(Systems)

cc:

A/Webb  
AA/Scumans  
MSC/Gilruth  
MSC/Elms