



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**NASA Management**  
**Opening Statement of U.S. Senator Bill Frist**  
**Chairman, Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space**  
**Wednesday, March 22, 2000**

I would like to welcome all of our guests here today as the Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space convenes this hearing on the current management challenges at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

This afternoon, although we hope to discuss where we've been in the past, we also hope to discuss where we're going.

First, let's take a look at what has brought us to today's hearing. The year 1999 proved to be very difficult for the agency. We have read the reports on:

- Workers searching for misplaced Space Station tanks in a landfill;
- Loose pins in the Shuttle's main engine;
- Failure to make English-metric conversions causing the failure of a \$125 million mission to Mars;
- Two-time use of Arejected@ seals on Shuttle's turbopumps;
- \$1 billion of cost overruns on the prime contract for the Space Station with calls from the Inspector General at NASA for improvement in NASA's oversight;
- Workers damaging the main antennae on the Shuttle for communication between mission control and the orbiting Shuttle;
- Urgent repair mission to the Hubble telescope;
- Approximately \$1 billion invested in an experimental vehicle and currently no firm plans for its first flight, if it flies at all; and
- The lack of long-term planning for the Space Station, an issue on which the subcommittee has repeatedly questioned NASA.

This subcommittee recognizes and appreciates the technical challenges and hurdles NASA must address to make their missions successful. However, based upon our initial review of the various investigation reports on these problems, the real culprit is management. We cannot and should not dismiss good basic management as an essential component of success. It still gets back to the fundamentals of planning, leading, organizing and controlling. Furthermore, we must ensure that every individual not only understands their job, but also performs it well.

(cont.)

Regardless of whether NASA's mantra is "Faster, Better, Cheaper", "Mission Success First", or some other leading phrase, "back to the basics" should be an integral part of the agency's infrastructure. The bottom line is that we need to confirm that proper management is in place and functioning as it should be.

We cannot proceed until we have done everything we can to ensure that safety is at the forefront of every NASA endeavor. We must realize that human lives are at stake each time the Shuttle is launched, and therefore, we must take every precaution to guarantee the astronauts return home safely.

It is unfortunate that we have to have this hearing today, but its necessity is vital. Furthermore, for \$14 billion a year, the American taxpayers deserve better. So with the oversight responsibilities of this committee, we hope to further discuss with our witnesses here today how to get NASA back on track.

We are alarmed by the sheer volume of the reports that we will discuss today. Their recommendations are numerous and far reaching. It will take time for us to fully review of these recommendations. In the meantime, I look forward to receiving NASA's implementation plan from these collective reports later this year.

Last night I read an alarming article that alleges that NASA currently holds the finding of the Young report, originally scheduled to be released earlier this month, but now delayed until final approval by the White House. If the content of the new stories is indeed true, this is very disturbing, and there is sure to be significant fallout from the facts the report will uncover. I intend to focus some of my questions towards this subject later in the hearing.

But first I want to thank each of our witnesses for appearing before the committee today. I would especially like to commend the individuals who participated on the various review teams. Your work is crucial to our oversight process.