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Dr. John L. McLucas  
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Dear John:

This is a follow-up to the final discussion at last Friday's meeting. The question of how an advisory committee such as ours can provide the greatest help, is always difficult to answer. It is tempting, especially for a committee with our composition, to get involved in technical matters. Perhaps there are special problems we can explore with the NASA team, however, it is my belief that we might be more useful examining problems of a larger, programmatic nature.

Andy brought up the subjects of program stability and utilization. I would agree that these are two major concerns whose solutions are fundamental to the success of the program. As we heard, program stability has two aspects, interactions external to NASA and internal cooperation. Both aspects and their resolution are highly political and thus sensitive. However, we may be able to provide a real service by reviewing the internal management concerns and developing recommendations. The committee members have vast experience in this area. External problems are more difficult, but again, I believe we can help.

For the Space Station to continue to receive support there must be a broader perception that it is a well thought out program, strongly supported by the scientific, engineering and commercial communities. Developing a strategy whereby this support will be forthcoming, thus enhancing the utilization of the Space Station, could be another contribution we can make.

Finally, I would like to elaborate on the other concern I raised, the apparent Apollo-like approach to getting "experimenters" on board. I believe, and I thought it was NASA's position, that there

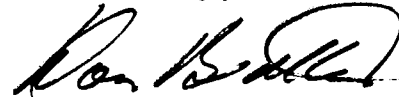
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must be a relaxation in the procedures that lead up to flight acceptance of Space Station experiments. Safety must be an overriding consideration but it must not become the excuse for overly complicating the documentation, configuration control, etc. that the NASA "system" seems to demand. Perhaps a strategy or approach that places safety in the proper framework, yet permits experiment developers some freedom to maneuver and thus reduce the cost/time of development, would be useful.

An advantage to examining programmatic rather than technical problems is that the level of background briefings required to get the committee up to speed is probably not as great as would be needed for a technical issue. Also, it should be possible to leave our committee meetings, return to our offices, and develop positions/recommendations without the need for further detail. Technical problems, by their very nature, usually demand greater and greater detail before one is satisfied that you know enough to make a reasonable recommendation.

Hopefully these thoughts will be useful to you as you plan our future agendas. If I can be of any help, please call.

Sincerely,



Donald A. Beattie

cc: A. Stofan

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