

Heads of Agency ISS Press Conference

A Panel Consisting of:

MICHAEL GRIFFIN, Administrator,
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

KEIJI TACHIKAWA, President, Japanese Space Agency (JAXA)

ANATOLY PERMINOV, Director, Russian Space Agency

JEAN-JACQUES DORDAIN, Director-General,
European Space Agency (ESA)

CAROLE LACOMBE, Acting President,
Canadian Space Agency (CSA)

[Moderated by Franco Bonacina, Media Relations, ESA]

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European Space Agency Headquarters
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[TRANSCRIPT PREPARED FROM A WEBCAST RECORDING.]

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, good evening,
3 and welcome to the European Space Agency for this Heads of
4 Agency's International Space Station press briefing.

5 I will introduce the heads of agencies, starting
6 with Carole Lacombe, from left to right; Carole Lacombe who
7 is the Acting President of the Canadian Space Agency.
8 Anatoly Perminov will come in a while, and he is the head
9 of Roskosmos for Russia. Then we have Michael Griffin who
10 is the NASA Administrator, followed by Jean-Jacques Dordain
11 who is Director-General of ESA, and Keiji Tachikawa who is
12 the president of JAXA. I am Franco Bonacina, head of Media
13 Relations and spokesperson at ESA.

14 English translation is on Channel 2, French
15 translation is Channel 1, and Russian on Channel 3. This
16 is for logistics.

17 I leave the floor directly to Dr. Griffin for a
18 general statement of introduction, and we only have half an
19 hour. So we will go ahead with questions and answers
20 immediately after Dr. Griffin's opening.

21 DR. GRIFFIN: My opening statement will be short
22 and to the point.

1 We had a very good meeting. We were able to
2 review the progress made over the last year, which I think
3 you know what substantial. After 3-1/2 years of, I would
4 say, very great difficulty in the Space Station program as
5 we worked hard to return the Space Shuttle to flight and
6 then return the Space Station to assembly, the partnership
7 held together. We found a way to keep the Space Station
8 going, and now we are going to find a way to finish it, to
9 staff it with a permanent crew of six as soon as possible,
10 and to complete this investment that we have made as a
11 partnership and begin to generate returns from it.

12 It was a good meeting. Within the next year, you
13 will see the European Columbus module attached to the Space
14 Station and the first piece of the Japanese module attached
15 to the Space Station. So we look forward to all of that.

16 Thank you.

17 MODERATOR: Thank you very much. That was very
18 short and down to the point.

19 For questions, please raise your hand, so that I
20 can identify you, and introduce yourself. Speak into the
21 microphone, please.

22 First question?

1 QUESTIONER: I would like to ask, any kind of
2 delay for the schedules which have been already put
3 forward. So, if you have any kind of delay, could you tell
4 us why it has happened? This is on schedule. I would like
5 to know like what you can update, the level of
6 construction.

7 DR. GRIFFIN: Well, we have published the planned
8 schedules for our Space Shuttle launches. There are five
9 planned for this coming year.

10 We don't anticipate any delays at the moment, but
11 I think you know, if you have watched Space Shuttle
12 launches at all in the past, that the actual launch dates
13 can be uncertain and can sometimes be delayed. If that
14 happens, we will tell you, but we are not at this point
15 anticipating any problems.

16 MODERATOR: Please introduce yourself before you
17 ask questions. Thank you.

18 QUESTIONER: Frederick Gardend [ph], AFP News
19 Agency.

20 Did you discuss the problems which could --
21 because to the International Space Station by the debris
22 left by the explosion of the Chinese satellite?

1 DR. GRIFFIN: We did not.

2 MODERATOR: Peter?

3 QUESTIONER: Peter de Selding, SpaceNews.

4 Two questions. Well, I can't let you go with
5 that. So has NASA performed orbital analysis to determine
6 whether the Station is going to have to perform a collision
7 avoidance maneuver because of the Chinese FY1C debris
8 problem? That is the first question.

9 The second question is: What is under current
10 planning, the point at which you get to a crew of six on
11 the Station?

12 Thank you.

13 DR. GRIFFIN: We perform debris analysis all the
14 time in recognition of the possibility of collision
15 avoidance maneuvers, and so there has been no change there
16 and at this point no requirement for a collision avoidance
17 maneuver. So that is not different.

18 And current planning, the crew of six capability
19 arrives in April of 2009.

20 MODERATOR: Further questions?

21 QUESTIONER: Mike Taverna from Aviation Week.

22 Could you give us the schedule done for the first

1 ATV launch, the Columbus and Node 2 and the first JAXA
2 module?

3 MR. DORDAIN: The first ATV launch is scheduled
4 on the 25th of July, this year. The launch of Node 2, I
5 think that this is in August, if I am right, but this is on
6 Space Shuttle, but I think it is August this year. So this
7 is the current schedule.

8 And for the JAXA module, Mr. Tachikawa.

9 MR. TACHIKAWA: Okay. The first module of JAXA
10 will be launched in December of 2007, but I am not sure.
11 Dr. Griffin told us the schedule is still not decided yet
12 and might be changed in some days.

13 DR. GRIFFIN: The current launch date scheduled
14 for the first element of -- the first of three elements of
15 the Japanese module is December 9th of this year, and
16 again, I think you all appreciate that Shuttle launch
17 schedules move around.

18 We are more interested in preserving a solid
19 smooth operational tempo than we are in holding onto a
20 particular launch date. So we are working through the
21 flow, one flight at a time. The most important flight is
22 always the next flight.

1 MODERATOR: Frederick?

2 QUESTIONER: Frederick Gastell [ph], BBCN on TBF.
3 Mr. Griffin, we have the opportunity to have you
4 on this side of the Atlantic. Can you explain to us what
5 is the strategy for NASA from 2010 on to take down payloads
6 from ISS?

7 Thank you.

8 DR. GRIFFIN: Well, from the retirement of the
9 Shuttle at the end of 2010 until we can deploy or Orion
10 Crew Vehicle which will replace the Shuttle, we have very
11 limited opportunities for payload return.

12 Return of trash, if you will, or other things
13 that we are not trying to save will come down in Progress
14 ATV and HTV to destructive reentry, but we don't have a lot
15 of opportunity for payload return in that period.

16 Now, if our COTS program, Commercial Orbital
17 Transportation Services, that we have initiated in the
18 United States, if that is successful, then that will
19 provide payload return capability.

20 QUESTIONER: Excuse me. A follow-on. What is
21 the schedule for Orion according to the NASA program?

22 DR. GRIFFIN: According to our program, Orion

1 will reach operational capability not later than 2014.

2 MODERATOR: Thank you.

3 There was a question back there. There is a
4 walking microphone which is coming up. Introduce yourself,
5 please.

6 QUESTIONER: Jessica Mazzeray [ph] from Russia
7 Today.

8 I would just like to know if the time scheduled
9 for completion of the ISS is still the same, and also what
10 do you estimate the final cost of its construction to be?

11 DR. GRIFFIN: I can't give you a cost number.

12 The completion date will be prior to the end of
13 2010, with some margin. We will fly our last assembly
14 flight.

15 MODERATOR: More questions?

16 QUESTIONER: Kio Chiando [ph] of Japanese
17 Newspaper Nikkei.

18 This is not directly to construction itself, but
19 have you discussed about the possibility of hitting some of
20 the objects that came out on the Chinese experiment that
21 might hurt International Space Station?

22 DR. GRIFFIN: That question was just asked, and

1 it was answered, and the answer was that we are always
2 doing debris analysis with the best ground observational
3 capability that we have. That has not changed, and so far
4 we have not seen any need for a collision avoidance
5 maneuver.

6 MODERATOR: Thank you.

7 Further questions?

8 Frederick, go ahead.

9 QUESTIONER: To Mr. Perminov and perhaps Mr.
10 Griffin, during this gap between 2010 and 2013, what are
11 the -- what's the deal with the program is about buying
12 some Soyuz and Progress? Do you have any agreement for
13 this gap where you won't have any U.S. capability?

14 DR. GRIFFIN: Well, I will start. Our current
15 agreement extends through -- I forget exactly the date, but
16 sometime in 2009, and we are working jointly on the
17 follow-on agreement to take us out further into the gap
18 between Shuttle retirement and Orion capability. So, when
19 it is done, I am sure we will announce it.

20 MODERATOR: More questions?

21 MR. PERMINOV: [via interpreter] I agree that we
22 are discussing this issue right now. It is a rather

1 complex one, and, therefore, I think that this year, we
2 will arrive at some kind of a positive outcome, and indeed,
3 between 2010 and 2013 season, Progress will be operating,
4 working, and we have discussed this point, and at some
5 point during this year, we will be coming back to this
6 issue and discussing it further.

7 Thank you.

8 QUESTIONER: Have you discussed in any more
9 detail the acquisition of more ATVs?

10 And Mr. Dordain, did you give us a date for
11 Columbus? I didn't notice.

12 MR. DORDAIN: The date for Columbus is 11 October
13 of this year, the launch by the Space Shuttle, and for more
14 ATV acquisition, I prefer to wait for the first launch of
15 ATV. After the first launch of ATV, I should be able to
16 say something, not before.

17 MODERATOR: Further questions?

18 [No response.]

19 MODERATOR: Doesn't look like.

20 Any of our speakers wish to add and conclude?

21 [No response.]

22 MODERATOR: No. It looks as if [speaking French

