

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20548-0001



January 28, 2004

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Ranking Democrat
Subcommittee on VA-HUD-Independent Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski:

I very much appreciate the opportunity to continue our dialogue today on the future of the Hubble Space Telescope. As we discussed, the Hubble is truly a world-class science platform. My decision to forego a Space Shuttle mission dedicated to the fifth on-orbit servicing of Hubble was a most difficult one. My decision was based on the obligations that we have to follow in the recommendations regarding safety and risk factors identified in the report of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board. Those factors bear on any decision to proceed with a Hubble servicing mission.

As a follow-up to your thoughtful request to solicit another view, I have asked Admiral Hal Gehman, Chair of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board, to review the matter and offer his unique perspective. Admiral Gehman has agreed to undertake this review and offer his view in a thoughtful and expeditious manner.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean".

Sean O'Keefe
Administrator