

SHORT CASSINI TALKING POINTS

The following is a brief set of Cassini Talking Points designed for distribution to the media. At the end is a list of our "experts" who are talking to the media on this issue. You can duplicate this for distribution.

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September 15, 1997

NEWS ADVISORY: TALKING POINTS MEMO: CASSINI
PREPARED BY: The National Space Society, Washington, DC

1. Cassini is the most scrutinized and reviewed planetary mission in history.

Every phase of the spacecraft's development has been validated through peer review, multi-agency and independent reviews requested by NASA. Individuals and groups opposing the launch have yet, after repeated invitations, to submit any peer-reviewed science to support their claims.

2. Cassini will give us new insights on formation of the Solar System and on the early chemistry of Earth. In July, 2004, Cassini will orbit Saturn planet for four years, studying its atmosphere, moons, magnetosphere and the fabled ring system. Cassini will deploy a probe called Huygens [Hoy-gens] to explore the moon Titan.

3. The Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generators (RTGs), which will provide power for Cassini, are proven safe. They have no moving parts and cannot meltdown or explode. They are NOT "nuclear reactors."

4. Solar cells cannot be used to power Cassini. The Saturnian system only receives 1/100th the sunlight we receive here at Earth; arrays required to power Cassini would be too heavy to launch with any rocket available today or in the near future. Opponents suggest that NASA develop a solar alternative because Saturn "will still be there." But it won't. The planetary alignment that provides the necessary gravity assists for Cassini occurs only every 175 years and will be lost in just a few years, long before we can expect improved solar technology or larger booster rockets.

5. There is less than one in a million chance that an accident could occur when Cassini "flies by" the Earth in 1999. We are in greater danger of Earth suffering a catastrophic impact from a comet or asteroid next year. The expected radiation dosage a person might receive is one millirem (unit of radioactivity). We receive an average of 360 millirems each year just by living on Earth.

** Other Experts to Speak on Cassini **

Dr. Gary Bennett: Consultant in aerospace power and propulsion systems; previous Manager of Advanced Space Propulsion Systems and Manager of Advanced Space Power Systems at NASA Headquarters; former Director of Safety and Nuclear Operations for the radioisotope power sources for Galileo and Ulysses.
208-365-1210

Mr. Bruce Anderson: A nationally recognized leader in environmental and solar energy fields. Author of "The Solar Home Book"; president of Earth Day USA.

617-253-0411

Mr. Michael Gilbrook: An environmental scientist and president of the National Space Society's Metro Orlando Space Society (MOSS) chapter; rebutted opposition to Ulysses in 1990 at Kennedy Space Center; organizer for pro-Cassini activities. 407-872-7801

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